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THE NEW YORKER

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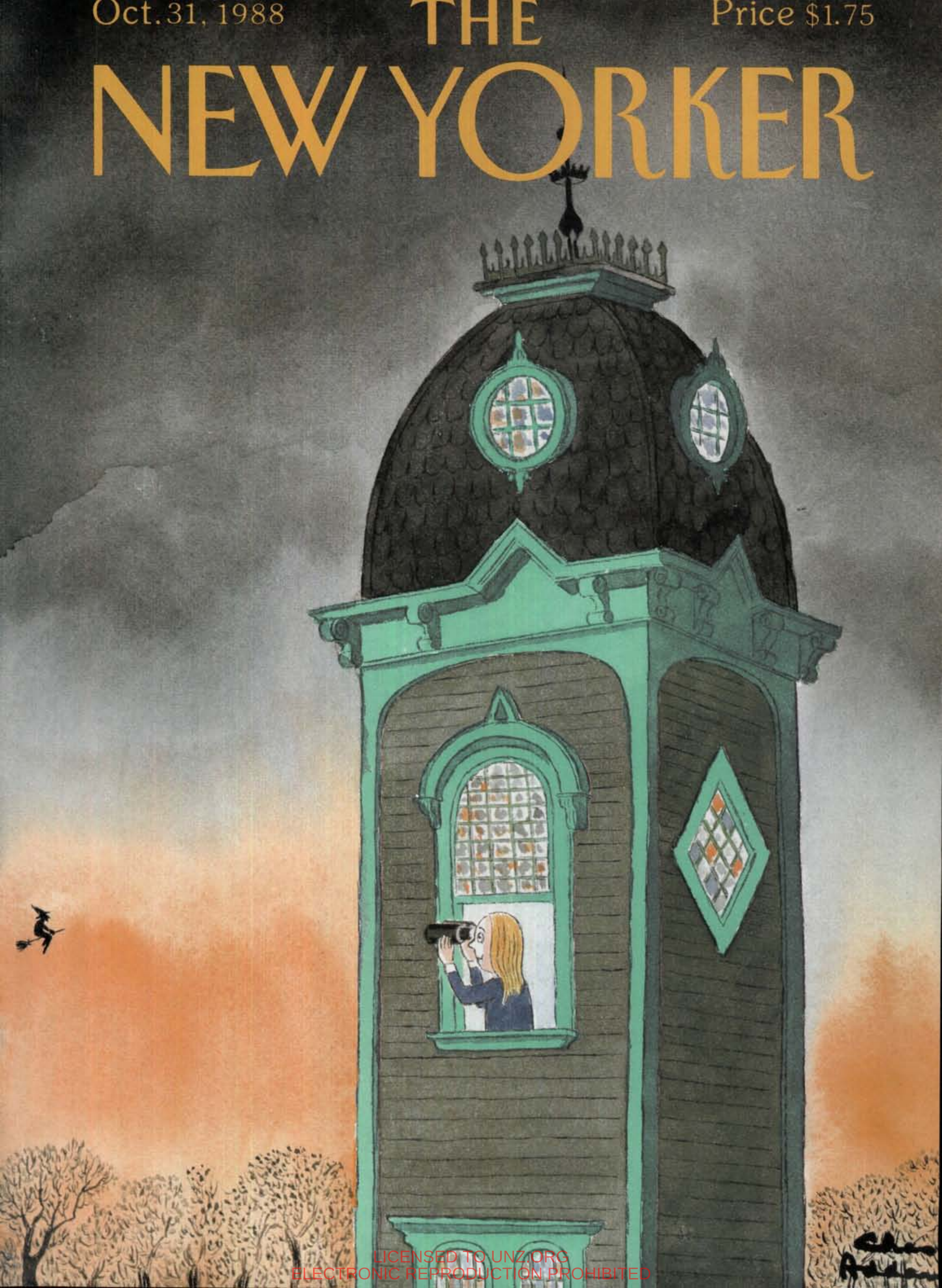

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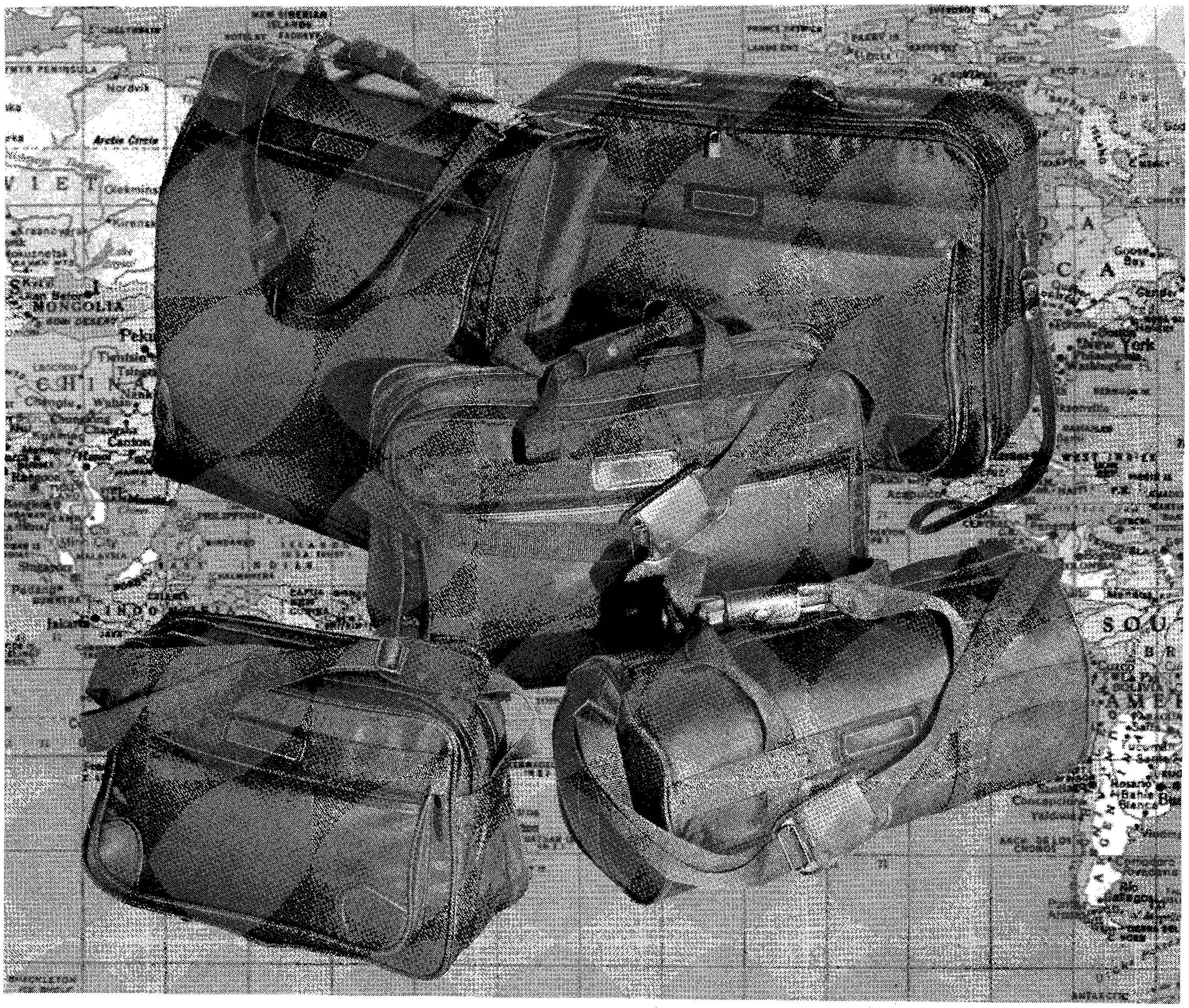

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Ain't Misbehavin'—A revival, after ten years, of this celebration of the music and the comic spirit of Fats Waller, in all its beauty and variety, as conceived and directed by Richard Maltby, Jr. The members of the original company are present and just as dynamic as they were the first time around. They are Nell Carter, Andre De Shields, Armelia McQueen, Ken Page, and Charlaine Woodard. The invaluable (and protean) Luther Henderson, conductor and arranger, again presides at the piano. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/5/88.) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 3.)

Cafe Crown—Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson head the large cast of Hy Kraft's play, which is directed by Martin Charnin. Opens Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 7. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 3.)

Checkmates—Ron Milner's "domestic comedy," about an older couple who lease the apartment above them to a recently married young couple, should be more entertaining than it is. There are some funny moments, though, and the performances are distinguished. The actors are Ruby Dee and Paul Winfield (downstairs) and Denzel Washington and Marsha Jackson (upstairs). Woodie King, Jr., directed. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Circle Repertory Company—**reckless,** a new play by Craig Lucas, about a woman whose husband has taken a contract out on her life, has slightly absurdist tendencies and pretensions but nothing to say. Only sprightly performances, from a cast led by Robin Bartlett, keep it from being unwatchable. (10/10/88) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

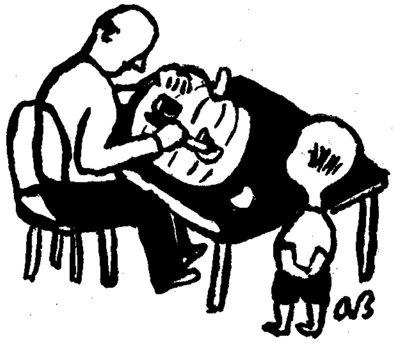
The Cocktail Hour—A new comedy by A. R. Gurney, with Keene Curtis, Bruce Davison, Nancy Marchand, and Holland Taylor. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Eastern Standard—A new play by Richard Greenberg, with Dylan Baker, Patricia Clarkson, Kevin Conroy, and Anne Meara. Previews Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 25-26. Opens officially on Thursday, Oct. 27. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30.)

Equity Library Theatre—A revival of the 1959 musical **fiorello!** (book by Jerome Weidman and George Abbott, music by Jerry Bock, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick) is the second in this season's series of eight productions. Opens Thursday, Oct. 27, and will run through Sunday, Nov. 20. (103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

Forbidden Broadway 1988—The funniest show in town is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way, as conceived by Gerard Alessandrini, who directed it and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Roxie Lucas, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath—inspired mimics all. (9/26/88) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8:30; Saturdays at 7:30 and 10:30; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3:30.)

Ghosts—Fionnula Flanagan and David McCallum in Ibsen's play. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2.)



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Godspell—A revival of the 1971 musical by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Good Black . . .—A play by Rob Penny. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 869-3981. Thursdays through Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Just Say No—A play by Larry Kramer. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 6 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Presenting Victor Herbert's **sweethearts.** (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30.)

Ma Rose—A play by Cassandra Medley. (Apple Corps Theatre, 336 W. 20th St. 242-4204. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Saturday at 2 and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Oct. 30.)

M. Butterfly—David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play is based on an actual case. A French diplomat takes as his mistress a star of the Beijing Opera, and some twenty years later—when they are both charged with being spies—discovers that "she" is a he. David Dukes is the diplomat; B. D. Wong is exceptional as his lover. Lori Tan Chinn and George N. Martin give them sound support. (4/4/88) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Michael Feinstein in Concert: Isn't It Romantic—A program of popular songs of the twenties, thirties, and forties. Feinstein's knowledge of the genre is exhaustive; he knows all the old songs and their intros, so the show becomes a meeting place for the timeless and the charmingly dated. (5/9/88) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Nov. 6.)

Rameau's Nephew—An adaptation by Shelley Berc and Andrei Belgrader of Diderot's play. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2.)

Romance/Romance—A pair of charming one-act musicals, with Barry Williams and Alison Fraser in the leading roles. Barry Harman wrote the clever books and lyrics, and Keith Herrmann wrote the engaging scores. Mr. Harman directed. (5/16/88) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Saved from Obscurity—A play written by and starring Tom Mardirosian, which had a brief workshop production last June. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

Speed-the-Plow—David Mamet's satire on Hollywood is just as scathing, just as acute as his "Glengarry Glen Ross," and even funnier, if that can be imagined. With David Rasche, Bob Balaban, and Felicity Huffman; directed by Gregory Mosher. (5/16/88) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Suds—This uninspired musical, set in a laundromat, uses the pop music of the early sixties to cash in on the nostalgia boom. (10/10/88) (Stage Left at Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

The Taffetas—Four talented young women, impersonating a group of singing sisters, perform hits from the fifties. The show, conceived by Rick Lewis as a live broadcast from the early days of television, represents yet another trip down memory lane. Still, for what it is, it's very well done. A deadpan script pokes gentle fun at the Eisenhower era, and some very silly songs are perfectly performed. With Jody Abrahams, Karen Curlee, Melanie Mitchell, and Tia Speros. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Ten Percent Revue—A musical revue by Tom Wilson Weinberg about gay life. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 4. Closes Sunday, Nov. 6.)

What Did He See?—A new play written and directed by Richard Foreman. With Will Patton, Rocco Sisto, and Lili Taylor. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Tuesdays through Thursdays and Sundays at 8, and Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 and 10.)

York Theatre Company—Presenting **sing for your supper: a rodgers and hart musical celebration.** (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8; Saturday, Oct. 29, at 3 and 8; Sunday, Oct. 30, at 3 and 7; and Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 8. For information about tickets, call 534-5366. Closes Saturday, Nov. 5.)

Long Runs—**anything goes:** This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, and Patti LuPone, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **burn this:** A play by Lanford Wilson, with Scott Glenn as a foulmouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly at 8. Matinées Wednesday and Saturday at 2. Closes Saturday, Oct. 29.) . . . **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to the sets and costumes by John Napier. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **a chorus line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **driving miss daisy:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **the fantasticks:** The longest long run recently turned twenty-eight. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42nd street:** A musical based on the old Warner

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Brothers movie, and by no means an improvement on it. Directed and choreographed by the late Gower Champion. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE:** Bonnie Franklin and Tony Musante in Terrence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3.) . . . **INTO THE WOODS:** This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **JACKIE MASON'S "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ME!":** The comedian's one-man show. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties, with Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Tim Shew and Norman Large star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **OIL CITY SYMPHONY:** Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Michelle Horman, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny musical. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **SARAFINA!:** This South African musical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. The acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **A SHAYNA MAIDEL:** A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Next Wave Festival—At the Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., about a block east of Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn, 1-718 636-4100: Lee Breuer and Bob Telson's new musical, **"THE WARRIOR ANT,"** in which an African-style griot, Latin rhythms, and Bunraku puppets tell the life story of a samurai ant. Tuesday through Friday, Oct. 25-28, at 8; Saturday, Oct. 29, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, Oct. 30, at 3. . . . ¶ At the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave., 1-718 636-4100: Teatro del Sur, of Buenos Aires, in **"TANGO VARSOVIANO,"** a theatre piece that incorporates dance and music. Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 7; Wednesday through Saturday, Oct. 26-29, at 8; and Sunday, Oct. 30, at 3. . . . Dennis Russell Davies conducting the **BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC** in a program of works by Kurt Schwertsik, Heinz Winbeck, Arvo Pärt, and Alfred Schnittke. With Gidon Kremer, violin. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8, and Saturday, Oct. 29, at 2 and 8. . . . **BOB BERKY** in "The Power Project." Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 7, and Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 8. Closes Sunday, Nov. 6. (The festival will continue through Sunday, Dec. 18.)

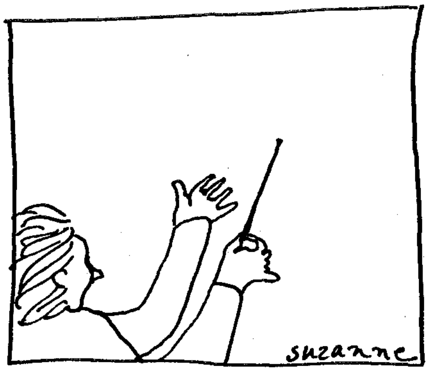
Ice Show—Debi Thomas, Rosalynn Sumners, Scott Hamilton, Brian Orser, and others performing to music by the American Symphony Orchestra, which is conducted by Peter Mansfield. (Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

DANCE

Joffrey Ballet—Opening performances of the engagement—Wednesday, Oct. 26, at 7:30: "Suite Saint-Saëns," "La Vivandière Pas de Six," and "Cotillon" (company première). . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 27, at 8: "The Dream," "Concerto Grosso" (New York première), and "Arden Court." . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 28, at 8: "The Clowns," "Round of Angels," "Remembrances Pas de Deux," and "Viva Vivaldi!" . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8: "The Dream," "Concerto Grosso," and "Arden Court." . . . ¶ Sunday, Oct. 30, at 2: "The Clowns," "L'Air d'Esprit," "Remembrances Pas de Deux," and "Viva Vivaldi!" . . . ¶ Sunday, Oct. 30, at 7:30: "The Dream," "La Vivandière Pas de Six," and "Cotillon." . . . ¶ Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 8: "Viva Vivaldi!," "Love Songs," and "Cotillon." . . . ¶ Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 8: "Reflections," "Billy the Kid" (company première), and "Light Rain." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989. Through Sunday, Dec. 4.)

Dance Theatre of Harlem—Opening performances of a nine-concert series—"Dougla," "Concerto Barocco," "Le Corsaire," and "John Henry." (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 690-4100. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8, and Saturday, Oct. 29, at 2 and 8.)

Joyce Theatre—Performances by two companies. **BALLET HISPANICO:** Tuesday through Friday, Oct. 25-28, at 8; Saturday, Oct. 29, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, Oct. 30, at 2 and 7:30. . . . **GARTH FAGAN BUCKET DANCE:** Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 7:30, and Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 8. Through Sunday, Nov. 13. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)



NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the lobby, people come and go talking of the Forty-fourth Street Marching and Chowder Club, which used to meet here, and of Lerner and Loewe, who knocked out "My Fair Lady" here, and of **ANDREA MARCOVICCI,** a torch-song specialist, who holds forth in the woody nook known as the Oak Room Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine-fifteen and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big, soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. **BLOSSOM DEARIE,** the owner of one of the smallest and most distinctive voices in town, sings her funny songs and her delicately pitched love songs at six-thirty Wednesdays through Saturdays. **BARBARA COOK,** a Broadway-musical star with a showstopping soprano, performs at nine and eleven Tuesday through Saturday, Oct. 25-29. The tall and sleek **KAREN AKERS,** a model of cabaret chic, begins a two-week visit at nine on Tuesday, Nov. 1.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—A fledgling jazz operation that takes its name from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome (1949-65). It's a cool person's kind of habitat: it has pastel walls, tile floors, a high ceiling, and is lightly forested. **EARL COLEMAN,** a bop-era singer (he replaced his idol, Billy Eckstine, in the Earl Hines band in 1943 and later recorded with Charlie Parker) who has a lady-killer's bass-baritone, sings with a quintet Friday and Saturday, Oct. 28-29. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A really blue but not really New York jazz club; the idea for the brass plaques that are engraved with the names of visiting jazz stars and embedded in the blue tables appears to have been borrowed from Hollywood. The formidable **CARMEN MC RAE,** a singer who leaves her own stamp on everything she touches, performs Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 25-30; pianist **JAMES WILLIAMS** leads a combo on Monday, Oct. 31. First set at nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—On the east side of the building, behind a dusty display window, there's a New York *Post* review of a Santana concert that took place here circa 1978; curatorial neglect seems to have made it a permanent exhibit. Inside, it's East Orange country boy Eddie Rabbitt on Wednesday, Oct. 26, and a folksy country duo called the O'Kanes on Friday, Oct. 28. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar, famous in this precinct and the wider world for its pianists, bassists, and, lately, horn players; a barstool sometimes serves as a good viewing perch and sometimes doesn't (standees abound on peak nights). **JOHN HICKS,** a pianist who has worked with Betty Carter and other fast modern folk, holds forth through Saturday, Oct. 29; on Sunday, Oct. 30, he will be joined by bassist **SANTI DEBRIANO** and trumpeter **DANNY MOORE.** Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Long communal tables swathed in pink and a bandstand panelled in oak. **GERI ALLEN,** a young Detroit-born pianist with a heavy, percussive, neo-Monkish style, leads a trio Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 25-30. **LESTER BOWIE,** a waggish St. Louis trumpeter famous for his onstage costumes (a lab technician's white jacket is the main one) and the

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

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assortment of squawks, growls, and half-valve sighs he gets out of his horn, arrives with a quintet on Tuesday, Nov. 1. Music from nine-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a small, well-upholstered room decorated with quaint Marcel Vertès murals (a nude at her easel, a leaping poodle), is a place where time pretty much stands still. **BOBBY SHORT,** who has come here for twenty years to sing from his collection of Porter and Coward and Ellington, begins a two-month residence on Tuesday, Nov. 1. Sets at ten and twelve Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St., at Ninth Ave. (924-0275)—Bluegrass is played in this frontier bar, on the western edge of town, out where the great potholed boulevards turn to cobblestones, and Weehawken, the gateway to the Jersey interior, shimmers in the distance. The music begins at nine on Fridays. **PAUL ADKINS & THE BORDERLINE BAND**—a quartet led by a guitarist and singer who has worked in J. D. Crowe's New South group—will be here on Oct. 28.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or headroom in this downstairs jazz club, but the musicians sometimes make you forget all about it. **MARK MURPHY,** a veteran jazz singer and hepcat, performs Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 25-30; **SUSANNAH MC CORKLE,** a singer who can croon a Berlin song and soft-pedal a Jobim samba as well as rattle off a boppish Oscar Brown, Jr., number, has the floor starting Tuesday, Nov. 1. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its nightly tour of romantic Manhattan. **JAKI BYARD,** a pianist and former Mingus hand who likes to jump without warning from style to style (he can go from pulsating stride to blistering free jazz in a wink) and to set a classic blues alongside a pop weeper such as "Ode to Billie Joe," will be around, with bassist **RALPH HAMPERIAN,** Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 25-30. Pianist **GEORGE CABLES** and bassist **RAY DRUMMOND** move in on Tuesday, Nov. 1. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side music room, one flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays, when a jukebox stocked with sixties rock and soul lights up. **FRANK UNDERWOOD,** who writes satirical Frishbergian songs (a couple of which Susannah McCorkle has recorded), performs some of them on Tuesday, Oct. 25; jazz singer **CARLA WHITE** and a quintet come in on Friday, Oct. 28. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy corner bar and restaurant with a piano at the center of things. **JUNIOR MANCE** works out on it, with his trusty bassist, **MARTY RIVERA,** at his side, Tuesday through Saturday, Oct. 25-29. **HARRY CONNICK, JR.,** a young New Orleans-born pianist and singer, flies all by himself on Sundays and Mondays. Music from nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor retreat that features avant-garde jazz, advanced and unadvanced rock, medicinal teas, medicinal beer, and space to think your thoughts in. The schedule: Monday, Oct. 24, **BIG DIPPER,** a Boston-based pop band; Friday through Sunday, Oct. 28-30, pianist **MAL WALDRON** and alto saxophonist **MARION BROWN,** with Russian pianist Sergei Kuriokhin and saxophonist **JOHN ZORN** on Friday and Saturday; and Monday, Oct. 31, the Chills, a New Zealand rock band. Music after nine.

Lone Star Café, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—This hangout for homesick Texans, French tourists, and local yokels brags that it's "the biggest and best honky-tonk north of Abilene." Big it ain't, but it does feature some genuine honky-tonk music, a souvenir stand, and TV monitors (which permit you to watch the action onstage in case your view of it is obscured by a cowboy or a structural element). **JOE (KING) CARRASCO,** who plays Tex-Mex party music that sounds cheerful even when he's stomping on gringo imperialists, will be around on Tuesday, Oct. 25, and so will Memphis piano thumper **ROSCO GORDON. KATIE WEBSTER,** an R. & B. pianist who was based for many years in Lake Charles, Louisiana (where she did session work for Slim Harpo, Clifton Chenier, and others), and later toured with Otis Redding's band, performs on Friday, Oct. 28. **ZACHARY RICHARD'S** Cajun band visits on Monday, Oct. 31. Music after nine. Hot vittles.

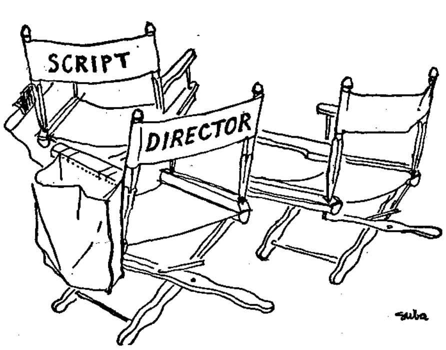
Lone Star Café Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The midtown branch of the aforementioned establishment. The façade is a Silver Eagle bus, the kind your itinerant musician cat tools around in. The inside features some stuff you probably wouldn't find in a county-line roadhouse—like a wallful of de-luxe Gibson guitars—and some you might expect to find: beer, neon beer signs, and men wearing dozer caps. Most of the music—rock, country, blues—is provided by local talent. On Monday, Oct. 31, **JERRY JEFF WALKER** and **ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL** perform in a benefit for Hospital Audiences. Music after nine. Dining.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and their high-heeled foxes. **MAUREEN MC GOVERN,** a pop-jazz singer who has a swell set of pipes and technique to burn, performs Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A spiffy uptown bar and restaurant, with signed photographs of some swinging non-musicians on the walls (Reggie Jackson smiling shyly, Dave Winfield tuning up in the cage) and some heavy hitters on the bandstand. **MC COY TYNER,** a pianist who gives you a lot of bang for your buck, will be here Friday and Saturday, Oct. 28-29. Music from about ten until two.

Ritz, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Fifty years ago, people practiced the jitterbug and the foxtrot in this ballroom; today's patrons listen mainly to rock, which issues from speakers the size of mobile homes, and sometimes engage in a combination of exercise and intimacy known as slam dancing. **SONIC YOUTH,** a rackety, ironic, droning, arty, echt Lower Manhattan rock band, will be here on Friday, Oct. 28; **SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY,** a blue-eyed soul man from the Jersey shore, sings with his **ASBURY JUKES** on Saturday, Oct. 29, and Monday, Oct. 31. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. **YELLOWMAN,** a Jamaican singer who is the star of just about all of his reggae ditties ("all of de girls, dey say, 'Yellow, you're bold' "), performs on Monday, Oct. 24; **GATO BARBIERI,** a hard-blowing, crowd-pleasing tenor saxophonist, directs a band Tuesday through Thursday, Oct. 25-27; the **AMBITIOUS LOVERS,** a downtown Manhattan operation (original Lounge Lizard **ARTO LINDSAY** and electronics specialist **PETER SCHERER** are the principals) that can go from a jangly New York funk tune to a wispy bossa-nova-ish number without blinking, hold forth on Friday, Oct. 28. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.



Speakeasy, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—A central Village lounge for folkies and others who practice low-decibel (but not necessarily low-voltage) music. **RICK DANKO,** whose uncouth, lonesome voice was just right for the nostalgic laments Robbie Robertson wrote for the Band, has the floor on Saturday, Oct. 29. Shows nightly from eight-thirty. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Pianist **CEDAR WALTON,** tenor saxophonist **HAROLD LAND,** bassist **RON CARTER,** and drummer **MICKEY ROKER**—a foursome steeped in the mysteries of hard bop and later developments—will be in this Village temple of jazz (pressed-tin ceiling, grainy b. & w. photos of your favorite demigods, knee-to-knee seating) Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 25-30. **JIM HALL,** who turns out some of the quietest and most beautiful guitar solos around, brings in a quartet on Tuesday, Nov. 1. Shows from ten. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room, salsa bands play for enthusiastic crowds on Mondays after nine-thirty. On Oct. 24, two masters of Latin rhythms, **TITO PUENTE** and **MARIO BAUZA,** will be here with their orchestras; Miami flutist **NESTOR TORRES** is the guest soloist. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, guitarist **JOE BECK** and bassist **JAY LEONHART** pick and pluck Tuesdays through Sundays from ten. **GAIL WYNTERS,** a Kentucky-born jazz singer who has a gospel-belter's voice, performs on Mondays, Oct. 24 and 31, from ten.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. Guitarist **KENNY BURRELL** leads a foursome Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 25-30; starting Tuesday, Nov. 1, **TEDDY EDWARDS,** a bop-era tenor saxophonist who left Detroit for Los Angeles forty years ago and rarely comes back this way, works with the New York rhythm section of **RICHARD WYANDS** (piano), **LISLE ATKINSON** (bass), and **AL HAREWOOD** (drums). Mondays are prime time for **MEL LEWIS'S** big band. Music from ten.

West End, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—The big room in this student rest stop (Columbia U. is across the street) has a non-institutional cafeteria, a bar that can seat a marching band, and a jukebox. The smaller room has tables, booths, a couple of hanging plants, and live jazz. **BIG NICK NICHOLAS,** a big-toned late-swing tenor saxophonist, leads a quartet Wednesday through Sunday, Oct. 26-30. On Mondays, comedians stand up and fall down. Shows from nine.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—If you like pictures of cows, there's a good one here, by the British painter Malcolm Morley, of some Holsteins adrift in a Turneresque landscape. There's also jazz, which flows peaceably from a passageway between the front-room bar and the back-room restaurant. **RUBY BRAFF,** the only horn player to work here (he speaks softly on his cornet), will be around with a trio every night but Sunday, Oct. 30, when guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE** hold forth. Music weeknights from eight, and Sundays from seven.

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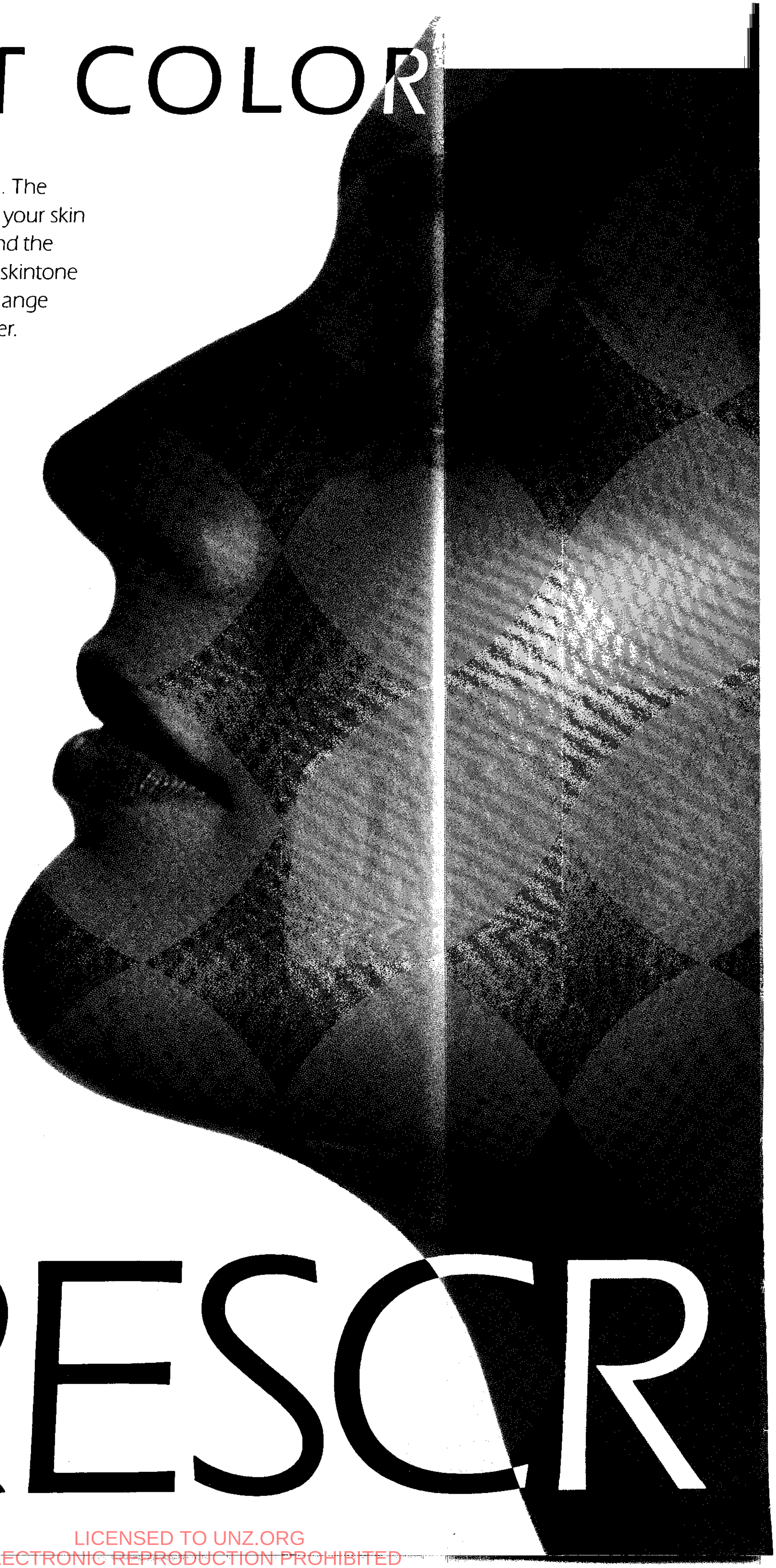

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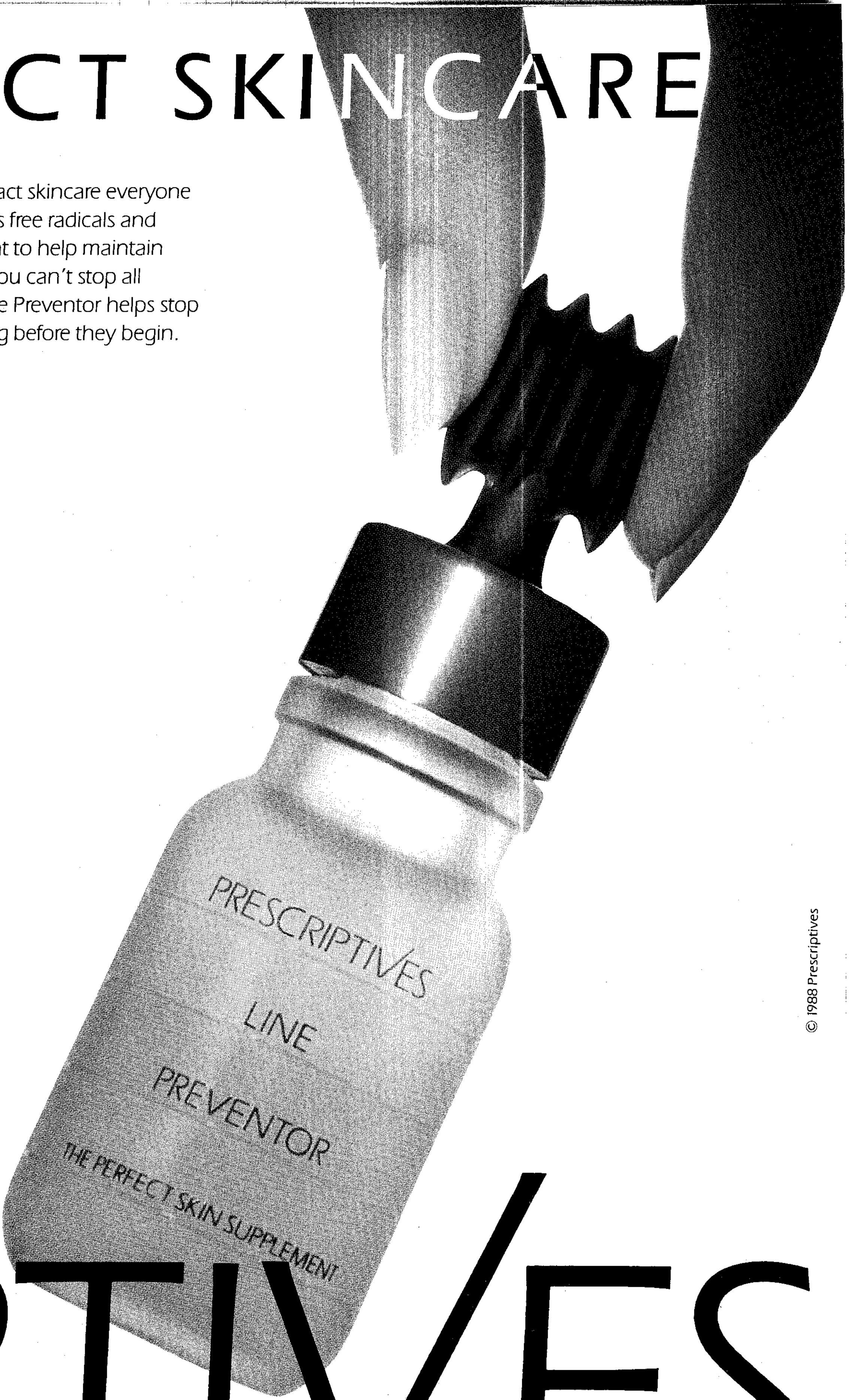
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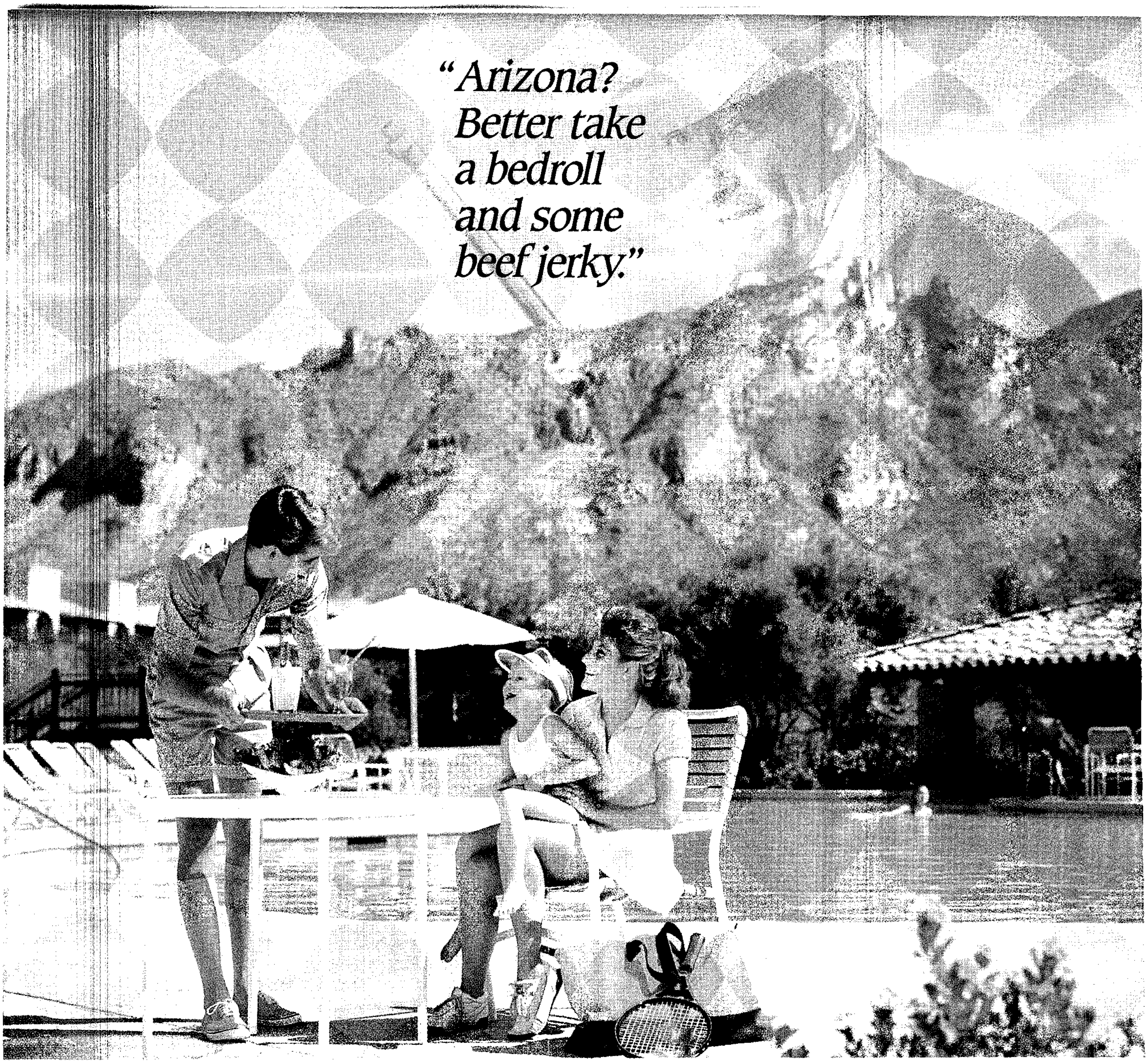

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

7710. Thursdays through Sundays at 8. Through Sunday, Nov. 6.

Moody Blues—Madison Square Garden. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8.

Raphael—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 28-29, at 8.

The Smithereens—With Paul Kelly & the Messengers. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

Art Ensemble of Chicago—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8.

The Ardoin Family—With Canray Fontenot. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8. For information about tickets, call 206-1050. . . . ¶ Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 8.)

Iggy Pop—With Murphy's Law. (Beacon Theatre. Monday, Oct. 31, at 8.)

Kenny Loggins—With Craig Shoemaker. (Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102. Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 1-2, at 8. Through Sunday, Nov. 6.)

Hothouse Flowers—Beacon Theatre. Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 8.

Benefit Concerts—Billy Bragg, Michelle Shocked, and Grupo Mancotal. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Wednesday, Oct. 26, at 8.) . . . ¶ The Lionel Hampton orchestra, the Dorothy Donegan trio, Bobby Short, and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Thursday, Oct. 27, at 8. For information about tickets, call 935-2200.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Hannelore Baron (1926-87)—Collages and boxes with bird imagery. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Schlesinger, 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St.)

Robert Birmelin—Large-scale paintings and drawings steadfastly confronting urban anomie. Through Nov. 10. (Bernard, 33 E. 74th St.)

Carmen Cicero—Two shows. Oil paintings at Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.; and watercolors at Kelly, 591 Broadway. (Both through Saturday, Oct. 29.)

James Daugherty (1887-1974)—Figurative paintings and works on paper from the teens, twenties, and thirties by an artist whose work has been compared to Thomas Hart Benton's. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Salander-O'Reilly, 22 E. 80th St. Open Mondays.)

Stephen De Staebler—New bronzes by an artist whose figurative sculptures have the fragmentary look of fossils. Through Nov. 12. (CDS Gallery, 13 E. 75th St. Open Mondays.)

Tom Doyle—Recent large-scale sculptures done in cherry wood. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

Robert Scott Duncanson (1821-72)—Landscapes by a black artist of the Hudson River School. Through Nov. 26. (Babcock, 20 E. 67th St. Closes at 4 on Saturdays.)

Richard Erdman—Recent nonobjective sculptures. Through Nov. 19. (Weintraub, 988 Madison Ave., at 77th St.)

Edgar Franceschi—New works in a variety of mediums. Through Dec. 4. (Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Howard Hodgkin—New abstract paintings, several of which continue onto the frame. Through Nov. 3. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Edward Hopper (1882-1967)—At the heart of this show is a group of drawings of Gloucester and Cape Cod, many of them, such as "Cape Cod Morning," studies for major paintings. The gallery owns the drawings; related paintings have been borrowed from public and private collections. Through Nov. 12. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

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Kazuko Inoue—Recent abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Stone, 48 E. 86th St.)

Donald Judd—Wall-mounted boxes made with metal and Plexiglas; they date from 1969 to 1986. Through Nov. 12. (Horan, 35 E. 67th St. Open Mondays. The Whitney Museum currently has a Judd retrospective.)

Francisco Ribalta (1565-1628)—Paintings from Valencia and Madrid. Through Dec. 8. (Spanish Institute, 684 Park Ave., at 68th St. Open Mondays.)

Joseph Stella (1877-1946)—Tropical paintings and drawings. Through Nov. 12. (York, 21 E. 65th St.)

Gary Stephan—New abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Open Mondays.)

Michael Tetherow—Abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (McCoy, 19 E. 71st St.)

Group Show—Chiaroscuro woodcuts from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, including works by Ugo da Carpi and Antonio da Trento. Through Nov. 5. (Colnaghi, at a new address, at 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays; closes at 4 on Saturdays.)

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Avigdor Arikha—Paintings and drawings of still-lifes, portraits, nudes, and interiors. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

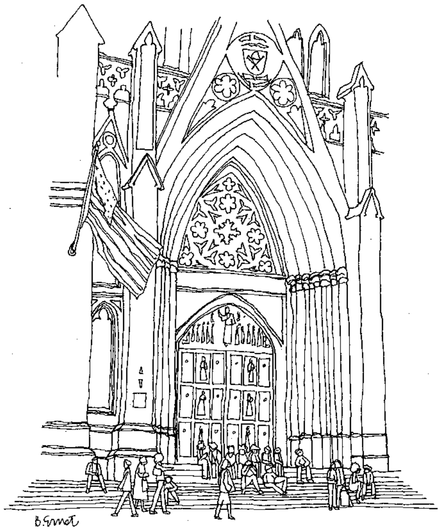
Troy Brauntuch—Drawings and paintings based on photographs the artist culled from magazines and newspapers. Through Nov. 5. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

Joan Brown—New paintings and sculptures from the artist's "Golden Age" series, which was inspired by Mayan art. Through Nov. 19. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

John Buck—Headless bare-wood figures balancing icons on their shoulders: a globe, an obelisk, a blossoming tree. Many of the works are accompanied by paintings with related imagery. Through Nov. 5. (Lamagna, 50 W. 57th St.)

Alan Cote—Intensely colored paintings with shapes abstracted from waves, leaves, and tree branches. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Washburn, 41 E. 57th St.)

William L. Haney / Stephen Tanis—Paintings and works on paper chronicling the history of a couple who meet on Wall Street, get married, party it up in night clubs with Mick and Tina, and then have a daughter who does the same. / Fantasy landscapes and still-lifes. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (French, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)



Tsugio Hattori—Abstract paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Reece, 24 W. 57th St.)

Robert Jessup—New paintings and drawings of, respectively, musicians and puppeteers. Through Wednesday, Nov. 2. (Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Michael Kessler—Paint has been poured, scraped, rubbed, scratched, and sanded to give the globular shapes on these panels rich surface textures. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

Milan Kunc / Bruce Weber—Stylized paintings, including the portraits "Student of Marxism" and "Young Urban Professional." / New photographs of figures. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

John Marin (1870-1953)—Autumn landscapes, some reduced to abstraction. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

G. Daniel Massad—Allegorical still-lifes in pastels. For instance, "Quince and Canteen" is intended to evoke the pathos of war. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

Nabil Nahas—Large-scale abstract paintings. Through Nov. 5. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Georges Noël—Abstract canvases whose surfaces are pocked and scratched. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Katherine Porter—Expressionist paintings. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Susan Shatter—Panoramic landscapes. Through Wednesday, Nov. 2. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

Harold Tovish—Ink drawings of hands. Through Nov. 19. (Sumers, 50 W. 57th St.)

Richard Tuttle / Michael Young—Constructions made with painted wood and dyed cloth. / Paintings of crosses and polka dots hung on a similarly designed wall. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Tom Wesselmann—Nudes (one titled "Bedroom Blonde with Necklace") and still-lifes done in brightly painted cutout metal. Through Nov. 19. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Kim Whanki (1913-74)—Oil-on-cotton paintings. Through Nov. 5. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

John Wilde—Magic Realist paintings. Through Nov. 12. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Group Shows—At the **Marisa del Re**, 41 E. 57th St.: Black-and-white paintings and sculptures by Dubuffet, Kline, Motherwell, Nevelson, and others. Through Nov. 12. . . . **Midtown**, 11 E. 57th St.: Nudes drawn, painted, printed, and sculpted by Milton Avery, Isabel Bishop, Isamu Noguchi, and many others. Through Saturday, Oct. 29.

GALLERIES—SoHo

Arakawa—Paintings you "walk into"—there are panels on the floor and ceiling as well as the walls. The works are primarily abstract, but some panels have Photo-Realist patches. Through Nov. 12. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Bill Barrell—Expressionist paintings, deliberately childlike in execution. Through Nov. 5. (Ingber, 415 West Broadway.)

Joseph Beuys (1921-86)—Sculptures, drawings, and prints. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

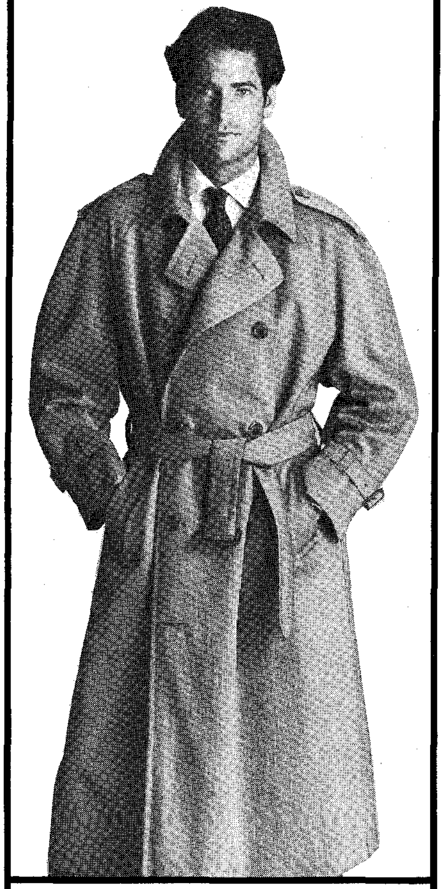
Ross Bleckner—New paintings and works on paper. Through Nov. 19. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Farrell Brickhouse—Abstract Expressionist paintings on irregularly shaped panels. Through Nov. 19. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Howard Buchwald—New abstract paintings. Through Nov. 9. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Deborah Butterfield—Six horses welded from found painted metal. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Loren D. Calaway—A survey of objects that seem to be functional but aren't. Through



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ART—Cont'd

Saturday, Oct. 29. (Viafora, 568 Broadway.)

Paul Caranicas—Shaped canvases that contrast the sky with architectural ruins and are accompanied by pieces of actual rubble. Through Nov. 5. (Schreiber-Cutler, 171 Spring St.)

Chema Cobo—Landscapes organized around a curtain of fish eyes, and other works by a Spanish painter. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Hank De Ricco—New sculptures and drawings. Through Nov. 5. (55 Mercer Street Gallery.)

Joseph DiGiorgio—In early October of 1976, the artist crossed the Wabash River on a night when the moon was full. A view of what he saw, the river through the trees and the moon high in the sky, is painted on both sides of a six-panel folding screen. Also, landscape paintings and drawings. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Walls, 137 Greene St.)

Elizabeth Dworkin—Abstract paintings. Through Nov. 5. (Munroe, 415 West Broadway.)

Karen Erla—Large sheets of Japanese paper painted in high-key colors. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Stark, 568 Broadway. Opens at noon.)

Marco Gastini / Sol LeWitt—Constructions by an Arte Povera sculptor whose materials are wood crates and shards of glass. / Photographs of a cube lit five hundred and eleven different ways, done in collaboration with Carol Huebner. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Stephen Greene—*Recent abstract paintings.* Through Nov. 10. (Pearl, 420 West Broadway.)

Robert Grosvenor—Two new sculptures. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Eve Ingalls—Abstractions. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Allen, 560 Broadway.)

Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel—A giant new installation, the central elements of which are a revolving gold disk and two beakers—one dripping water into a bowl, the other dripping it onto a hot plate. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Steven Katz / Michael Harnett—Realist paintings and drawings of New York. / Still-lifes on narrow vertical canvases. Through Nov. 3. (Perlow, 560 Broadway.)

Barry Le Va—Three maze sculptures (each climbing from the floor to the wall) using stone, metal, and wood, and three large ink-on-paper works called "Sculptured Activities." Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Robert Longo—Large-scale wall sculptures, including twenty spinning gold-leafed oil drums. Through Nov. 5. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Michael Mazur—Paintings and other works with motifs taken from the Chinese garden. Through Nov. 19. (Fawbush, 568 Broadway.)

Will Mentor—Paintings and sculptures by an artist who works in a variety of styles and mediums. Through Nov. 12. (Rubin, 155 Spring St.)

Max Miller—New paintings and works on paper. Through Nov. 26. (Sharpe, 152 Wooster St.)

Bruce Nauman and Richard Serra—Sculptures and drawings by both artists. Through Nov. 12. (Castelli, 578 Broadway.)

George Negroponte—New abstract paintings. Through Nov. 12. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

Tony Oursler / Rachel Bas-Cohain (1937-83)—Videos, some incorporated into sculptural works. "Constellation Intermission," for instance, represents Gemini as two enormous wood figures and a series of video monitors. / Sculptures that frost and defrost, freeze and drip. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Brown, 560 Broadway.)

Pino Pascali (1935-68)—In the Ala gallery's first room, you'll find what looks like the beginnings of a giant, precarious house of cards. In the second, you'll see a thematically related vista: canvas-on-wood sculptures representing "decapitated" giraffes and rhinoceroses. If you're wondering what decapitated them, a good guess would be the missile launchers and cannons assembled at the other end of the room. The artillery is made from scrap metal and wood. Through Nov. 5. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Mel Pekarsky—Desert and mountain paintings. Through Nov. 26. (Einstein, 591 Broadway.)

I. Rice Pereira (1907-71)—Geometric abstractions from the fifties and sixties. Through Nov. 12. (Zarre, 379 West Broadway.)

Garnett Puett—New works by an artist who builds sculptures out of steel, wood, and glass, then invites bees to add the finishing touch: honeycombs. During the show, SoHo bees will take part in a work in progress. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

George Rickey—A small retrospective of kinetic sculptures. Through Nov. 26. (Davidson, 415 West Broadway.)

Judy Rifka—"History of Sculpture," a new series *of grisaille paintings comprising* syncopated repetitions of classical heads, profiles of winged Nike, and Parthenon columns. Through Nov. 5. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Edwin Ruda / Mark Williams—Works on paper. / Painted wood constructions. Through Nov. 5. (Condeso-Lawler, 76 Greene St.)

Ken Sofer—Recent works by an artist who paints on plywood boxes and then joins them with girders and bolts. Through Nov. 12. (M-13, at 72 Greene St.)

Andrew Spence—New abstract canvases—vividly painted circles, rectangles, and squares. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Mike and Doug Starn—The Starn twins showing new photographic collages. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

Elaine Sturtevant—Drawings after Beuys, Johns, Warhol, Rosenquist, Duchamp, and others, dating from 1965 to 1973, and a new series of drawings after Lichtenstein. Through Nov. 16. (Cutler, 164 Mercer St.)

Rosemarie Trockel—Sculptures and knit paintings (machine-woven wool is the medium) by a German artist having her first solo gallery show here. Through Nov. 12. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Anton van Dalen—A retrospective of paintings, sculptures, drawings, and objects such as wooden toys and dioramas. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway.)

Peter Voulkos—Abstract Expressionist paintings from the fifties and sixties and works on paper from throughout his career. Through Nov. 16. (Twining, 568 Broadway.)

H. C. Westermann (1922-81)—Sculptures and drawings. Through Nov. 19. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Stephen Westfall—New nonobjective paintings. Through Nov. 12. (Newburg, 580 Broadway.)

Michele Zalopany—Paintings done in black, white, and gray. The subjects vary (two boys on a beach, a trellised porch, the Hotel Astor), but many of the works seem nostalgic for a long-gone time. Through Nov. 12. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

Group Material—The second installation in a series of four, all of which are loosely concerned with the idea of democracy. This one is titled "Politics and Election," and incorporates works by Leon Golub, Christy Rupp, Martin Wong, and others. Through Nov. 12. (Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster St. Opens at noon.)

Group Shows—At the **Castelli**, 420 West Broadway: Works by Jasper Johns, Bruce Nauman, and David Salle. Through Nov. 12. . . . **The Drawing Center**, 35 Wooster St.: Drawings by artists whose work, as the Center puts it, "derives from primitive, folk, and naïve sources." Alison Saar, Tom Duncan, and Denis Gaston are among those represented. Through Nov. 26. (Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

OTHER GALLERIES

Francesco Clemente / Robert Ryman—"Funerary Paintings," all about six feet tall and sixteen feet long. / Primarily white paintings exhibited in rooms the artist designed for the show. Through June 18. (Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St. Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

Carol Kreeger Davidson—Recent abstract sculp-

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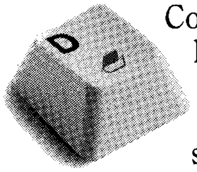

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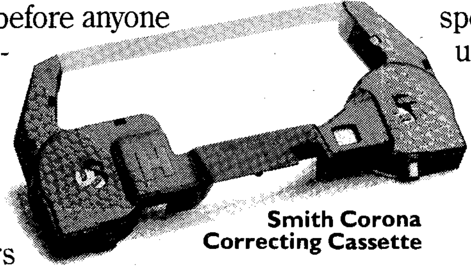
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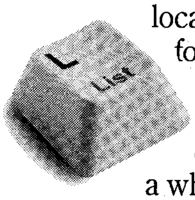

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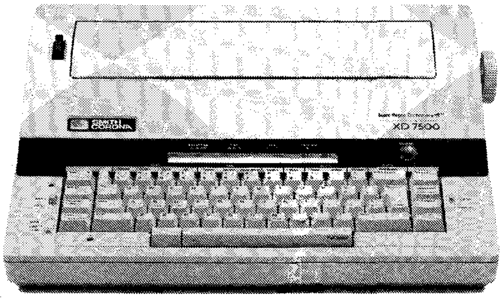

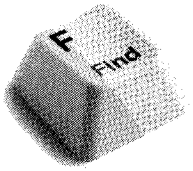

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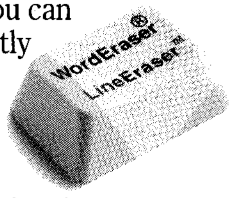

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ART—Cont'd

tures. Through Nov. 13. (Humphrey, at both 242 E. 5th St. and 37 E. 7th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Matt Mullican—Sculptural works in various mediums. Through Nov. 12. (Klein, 611 Broadway.)

Michelangelo Pistoletto—Mirror-based objects predominate in a show covering three decades of this Arte Povera artist's output. Through Nov. 27. (P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Artists' Illustrated Letters—A hundred letters written by Alberti, Gauguin, Sargent, Picasso, di Suvero, Bearden, and other artists more accustomed to making points with pictures. Through Nov. 5. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 to 6:30; Wednesdays, 10 to 8:30; Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 1 to 5.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Lois Conner—Platinum prints of panoramic landscapes in China, Hawaii, Louisiana, and New York. Through Nov. 17. (Pfeifer, 568 Broadway.)

Ray K. Metzker—Twenty-six North American landscape photographs. Through Dec. 3. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

Richard Ross—Diptychs and triptychs that contain photographs of sections of Old Master paintings. Through Nov. 3. (Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

George Tice—Photographs of the home towns of Mark Twain, James Dean, and Ronald Reagan. Through Nov. 26. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

National Geographic Society Photographs—In celebration of its centennial, the Society has mined its archives for these two hundred and sixty-five photographs. Through Sunday, Oct. 30. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The exhaustive Degas exhibit has been mounted in spacious new galleries, *comme il faut*. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ A retrospective of works by Umberto Boccioni, an Italian Futurist painter and the only sculptor in that movement. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ Collages and other works by Anne Ryan. Through Jan. 29. . . . ¶ A selection of watercolors and drawings by Paul Cézanne from the last thirty years of his life. Through Nov. 6. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of works by the German painter Anselm Kiefer. Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ A comprehensive show of the drawings of Philip Guston. Through Tuesday, Nov. 1. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** About a hundred prints by Nicholas Nixon. Through Nov. 13. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Douglas Davis, the subject of a show here, once borrowed the Houston Astrodome to send private messages via satellite to every nation on earth. At other times, the video-performance artist has settled for less: the tri-continental satellite broadcast "Ménage à Trois," for instance, and the merely *bi*-continental "Double Entendre." The works on view include artifacts from such events, two TV sets painted black and tuned into static, and a photograph done in conjunction with Komar & Melamid. Starts Friday, Oct. 28. . . . ¶ Silk screens and drawings from Andy Warhol's Mercedes-Benz series, a project he was working on at the time of his death. Through Nov. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

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	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2			

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A twenty-five-year retrospective of Donald Judd's œuvre: paintings, sculptures, and furniture. Through Dec. 31. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Cleopatra and other rulers of ancient Egypt's Ptolemaic dynasty (305-30 B.C.) are seen in a show of stone statuary and portrait heads. The period is also represented by reliefs, gold jewelry, silver vessels, and other objects. Through Jan. 2. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

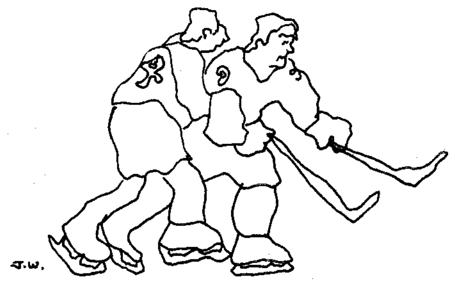
American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibition re-creating the events of a four-year (1838-42) American naval expedition to the South Seas and Antarctica and displaying a wealth of materials brought back from that voyage, including charts and maps and flora and fauna. Through Jan. 1. . . . ¶ An exhibition of fish illustrations (1838-1980) made with the aid of scientists' field sketches and photographs. Through Dec. 11. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—In the seventeenth century, the cupboards and drawers of Burghley House, in Devonshire, were filled with Renaissance jewelry, pitchers with diamonds and rubies embedded in them, and gold and silver tableware. Sixty of these objets de vertu, preserved as heirlooms, have been brought here for display. Through Nov. 27. . . . ¶ Several hundred drawings by the German architect Erich Mendelsohn, a contemporary of Mies and Gropius. Through Jan. 8. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St.—"Soldier Poets of the Great War," a show devoted to the work of the sixteen poets whose names were inscribed on a memorial stone in Westminster Abbey on Armistice Day, 1985. The manuscripts and first editions are by, among others, Julian Grenfell, Isaac Rosenberg, Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke, and Robert Graves. Through Nov. 26. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—An exhibit of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japanese textiles which is all about ordinary things (firemen's coats, banners, and bedcovers) and the extraordinary pains their creators took to insure their distinction. Through Dec. 11. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—Jewish journalism in the United States is the topic of an exhibition of newspapers, comic strips and other drawings, and photographs from the past hundred and fifty years. The newspapers are in English, German, Ladino, Hebrew, and Yiddish. (Open daily except Fridays and Saturdays. Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)



Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—An exhibit of roughly a hundred music scores by, among others, Bach, Mahler, Arthur Sullivan, and Mozart (several by the last; the work on view that he composed at age five is in his father's hand). Through Nov. 6. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Manuscripts of plays written by Eugene O'Neill, along with other artifacts, have been put on display in recognition of the author's centenary. Through Jan. 8. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Geoffrey Beene, in the business now for twenty-five years, is being treated to a retrospective that includes not only clothes with his label but accessories, videos of fashion shows, and photographs by Horst, Richard Avedon, and others. Through Saturday, Oct. 29. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—Malcolm McLaren, the subject of what the museum describes as "an unconventional art exhibition," has been called many things—most generously, rock producer, fashion designer, and cultural theorist. This collection of clothes, posters, album covers, cassettes, and videotapes follows McLaren's career as it bounced from the Sex Pistols to Adam and the Ants to a British fashion/bondage shop called Let It Rock. Through Nov. 20. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—A historical survey of Hebrew books and manuscripts: Bibles, a seventeenth-century parchment scroll of the Book of Esther, the *Tripartite Mahzor*, and volumes on science, law, and literature. Through Jan. 14. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Collage paintings by Benny Andrews dating from the fifties through the seventies. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Monday, Oct. 24, at 8: "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Lucia Aliberti, Alfredo Kraus, and Brian Schexnayder; conducted by Edoardo Müller. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 6: "Götterdämmerung," with Hildegard Behrens, Kathryn Harries, Christa Ludwig, Toni Krämer, and Anthony Raffell; James Levine. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Oct. 26, at 8: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Kathleen Battle, Leo Nucci, Rockwell Blake, and Enzo Dara; Arthur Fagen. . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 27, at 8: "Il Trovatore," with Eva Marton, Fiorenza Cossotto, Giorgio Lamberti, and Sherrill Milnes; Ralf Weikert. . . . ¶ Friday, Oct. 28, at 8: "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Lucia Aliberti, Alfredo Kraus, and Gino Quilico; Edoardo Müller. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 29, at noon: "Götterdämmerung," with Hildegard Behrens, Kathryn Harries, Christa Ludwig, Toni Krämer, and Anthony Raffell; James Levine. . . . ¶ Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8:30: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Kathleen Battle, Leo Nucci, Rockwell Blake, and Enzo Dara; Ralf Weikert. . . . ¶ Monday, Oct. 31, at 8: "Il Trovatore," with Aprile Millo, Fiorenza Cossotto, Giorgio Lamberti, and Sher-

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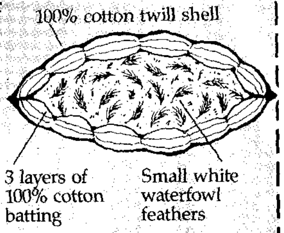
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rill Milnes; Arthur Fagen. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 8: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Kathleen Battle, Leo Nucci, Rockwell Blake, and Enzo Dara; Ralf Weikert. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 6: "Götterdämmerung," with Jeannine Altmeyer, Kathryn Harries, Christa Ludwig, Wolfgang Neumann, and Anthony Raffell; James Levine.

New York City Opera—Tuesday evening, Oct. 25: "Mefistofele," with Marianna Christos, Margaret Cusack, Harry Dworchak, and Frederic Kalt; conducted by Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Thursday evening, Oct. 27: "Attila," with Linda Roark-Strummer, John Cheek, and Otoniel Gonzaga; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Friday evening, Oct. 28: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Leigh Munro, Rebecca Russell, Ron Peo, Michael Cousins, and Joseph McKee; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, Oct. 29: "Tosca," with Elizabeth Holleque, Michael Sylvester, and Roger Roloff; Elio Boncompagni. . . . ¶ Saturday evening, Oct. 29: "Le Nozze di Figaro," with Sheryl Woods, Elizabeth Hynes, Cynthia Rose, Dean Peterson, and William Parcher; Scott Bergeson. . . . ¶ Sunday matinée, Oct. 30: "Cavalleria Rusticana," with Kathryn Bouleyn, Cynthia Rose, and Stefano Algieri; and "Pagliacci," with Frances Ginsberg, John Absalom, and Rodger Hugh Wangerin. Both conducted by Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Sunday evening, Oct. 30: "The Turn of the Screw," with Wendy Hill, Phyllis Treigle, and Peter Kazaras; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Tuesday evening, Nov. 1: "Attila," with Linda Roark-Strummer, John Cheek, and Otoniel Gonzaga; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, Nov. 2: "Carmen," with Janis Eckhart, Ruth Golden, Dale Smith, and William Parcher; Michael Morgan. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 1. Through Sunday, Nov. 20.)

Center for Contemporary Opera—Presenting "My Heart's in the Highlands," by Jack Beeson and William Saroyan. With an orchestra conducted by Richard Marshall. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Tuesday, Oct. 25; Thursday, Oct. 27; and Saturday, Oct. 29, all at 8. For information about tickets, call 870-2010.)

Opera Orchestra of New York—Eve Queler conducting a concert version of Bellini's "Beatrice di Tenda." (Carnegie Hall. Thursday, Oct. 27, at 8.)

"Nixon in China"—Excerpts from John Adams' opera will be performed by James Maddalena, Carolann Page, John Duykers, Trudy Craney, Sanford Sylvan, and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Other works by Mr. Adams, who is conducting, are also on the program. (Avery Fisher Hall. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "Madame Butterfly." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 29-30, at 7:30. Through Sunday, Nov. 13.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 7:30: Andrew Davis conducting a Beethoven-Strauss program, with Mitsuko Uchida, violin. . . . ¶ Thursday, Oct. 27, at 8; Friday, Oct. 28, at 2; Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8; and Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 7:30: Raymond Leppard conducting a program of music by Handel, Britten, and Dvořák. With Ida Haendel, violin.

Sydney Symphony—Stuart Challender conducting this orchestra's first appearance here. With Joan Sutherland, soprano, and Richard Bonynge, guest conductor. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 3.)

Vienna Philharmonic—Leonard Bernstein conducting his own work, as well as compositions by Beethoven and Brahms. With Wolfgang Schulz, flute. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 8.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Riccardo Muti conducting music by Dvořák, Steven Stucky, and Ravel. With Kyung Wha Chung, violin. (Avery Fisher Hall. Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 8.)

Orchestra of St. Luke's—Karel Husa conducting a program of Czech music, including Dvořák's piano concerto. With Rudolf Firkušný as the soloist. (Metropolitan Museum. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8.)

Manhattan Philharmonia—Glen Cortese conducting, with Daniel Stroup and Carlos Correa, duo piano. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Mozart Festival Orchestra—Baird Hastings conducting. (First Presbyterian Church, Fifth Ave. at 12th St. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8. For information about tickets, call 675-9127.)

Musica Viva—Walter Klauss conducting, with Lucille Beer, mezzo-soprano. (Church of All Souls, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 7. Admission by contribution.)

Hanover Band—Roy Goodman conducting an ensemble of thirty-eight musicians playing Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven on period instruments. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 8.)

Riverside Symphony—George Rothman conducting. (Alice Tully Hall. Monday, Oct. 31, at 8.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp conducting four works for two string orchestras. With Paul Peabody, violin. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 8.)

Musica Sacra—Richard Westenburg conducting the chorus and orchestra in a performance of Bach's B-Minor Mass. With vocal soloists. (Avery Fisher Hall. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8.)

RECITALS

Pinchas Zukerman and Marc Neikrug—Violin/viola and piano, playing sonatas by Brahms. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 8.)

Jeffrey Siegel—Playing and talking about five Chopin polonaises. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 8.)

Bowery Ensemble—Playing, among other works, the première of Michael Gordon's "Four Kings Fight Five." (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Sylvan Winds—Chamber music. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Thursday, Oct. 27, at 8.)

Talisman—An a-cappella group singing Halloween-flavored songs. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Thursday, Oct. 27, at 8.)

Jan DeGaetani and Gilbert Kalish—Mezzo-soprano and piano, in a recital called "Songs of Love and Death." (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—With Valerie Girard, soprano; eight cellists; and artists of the society. (Alice Tully Hall. Friday, Oct. 28, at 8; Saturday, Oct. 29, at 2; and Sunday, Oct. 30, at 5.)

Gayle Schmidt—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—Chamber music. (Metropolitan Museum. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

Mendelssohn String Quartet—Playing works by Beethoven, Ernst Toch, and Dvořák. (Merkin Concert Hall. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8.)

Emerson String Quartet—Performing quartets by Beethoven, Prokofiev, and Schubert. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Saturday, Oct. 29, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Vladimir Spivakov—Violin, with Leonid Block, piano. (Avery Fisher Hall. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 3.)

Hilliard Ensemble of London—In a program that features Orlando di Lasso's Requiem. (Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 3. For information about tickets, call 923-3700.)

Anthony Newman—Organ, in an all-Bach concert. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Aesun Ahn—Piano. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 8.)

Ruth Laredo—Piano, performing works by Scriabin and talking about them. (Metropolitan Museum. Monday, Oct. 31, at 8.)

New York Philomusica—Playing chamber works by Haydn, Jan Ditmas Zelenka, and Villa-Lobos. (Merkin Concert Hall. Monday, Oct. 31, at 8.)

Anton Nel—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 8.)

Aston Magna—Playing two concerti by Bach and works by his contemporaries. (Merkin Concert Hall. Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 8.)

Chamber Sound—In a program of classical chamber music. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 8.)

Andrew Rangell—Piano. The second in a series of concerts presenting the complete Beethoven sonatas. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Wednesday, Nov. 2, at 8.)

SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for Madison Square Garden is 563-8300, for the Meadowlands 1-201 935-3900, and for Nassau Coliseum 1-516 587-9222.)

Basketball—Exhibition game—Knicks vs. Los Angeles Lakers. (Madison Square Garden. Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 7:30.)

Football—Jets vs. Pittsburgh Steelers. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. Sunday, Oct. 30, at 1.)

Frisbee—The New York Invitational Ultimate Frisbee Championship. Preliminary rounds Saturday, Oct. 29, from 10 to 5; semifinals Sunday, Oct. 30, at 10; finals Sunday, Oct. 30, at 2. (Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx.)

Hockey—At **BYRNE MEADOWLANDS ARENA:** Devils vs. Buffalo Sabres, Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 7:45. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Hartford Whalers, Friday, Oct. 28, at 7:45. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Philadelphia Flyers, Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 7:45. . . . **NASSAU COLISEUM:** Islanders vs. Toronto Maple Leafs, Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 8:05. . . . ¶ Islanders vs. Winnipeg Jets, Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 8:05. . . . **MADISON SQUARE GARDEN:** Rangers vs. Philadelphia Flyers, Wednesday, Oct. 26, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Pittsburgh Penguins, Sunday, Oct. 30, at 7:30.

Horse Show—National Horse Show. (Madison Square Garden. Competitions Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 1-2, at 1:30 and 7:30. Through Sunday, Nov. 6.)

Racing—At **AQUEDUCT:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **MEADOWLANDS:** Weeknights at 7:30.

Trotting—At Yonkers Raceway: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8.

ET ALIA

Poetry and Prose Readings—J. D. McClatchy reading from his own poetry. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. Tuesday, Oct. 25, at 6. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Cynthia Ozick reading from her own prose. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Monday, Oct. 31, at 8.) . . . ¶ Daniel Halpern and Stanley Plumly reading from their own poetry. (Guggenheim Museum Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Flower Show—Japanese chrysanthemums—single-stemmed, in masses, bonsai-pruned—are on display in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. Daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5. Through Sunday, Nov. 13.)

Daylight Saving Time—Ends Sunday, Oct. 30, at 2 A.M. Turn the clock back an hour.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

EAST SIDE

PUBLIC THEATRE, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
Through Oct. 27: (Separate admissions) "The Last Emperor" (1985; directed by Li Han Hsiang; in Mandarin, with Chinese and English subtitles); and "Homecoming" (1985; Yim Ho; in Mandarin, with Chinese and English subtitles).
Oct. 28: (Separate admissions) "Gonza the Spearman" (1986; Masahiro Shinoda; in Japanese); and "Escape from Japan" (1964; Yoshishige Yoshida; in Japanese).
Oct. 29-30: (Separate admissions) "Early Summer" (1951; Yasujiro Ozu; in Japanese); "Tora-San Goes North" (1987; Yoji Yamada; in Japanese); "Gonza the Spearman;" and "Escape from Japan."
Nov. 1: "The Human Condition, Part 1: No Greater Love" (1959; Masaki Kobayashi; in Japanese).
From Nov. 2: (Separate admissions) "Gonza the Spearman;" and "Pale Flower" (1964; Masahiro Shinoda; in Japanese).

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Bat 21" (Peter Markle), with Gene Hackman and Danny Glover.
Theatre 2: "Imagine: John Lennon" (Andrew Solt), a documentary.
Theatre 3: "Alien Nation" (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Mystic Pizza" (Donald Petrie), with Julia Roberts, Annabeth Gish, and Lili Taylor.

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through Oct. 27: "Gorillas in the Mist" (†).
From Oct. 28: To be announced.

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "The Accused" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Kelly McGillis and Jodie Foster.
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).
Theatre 3: "Without a Clue" (Thom Eberhardt), with Michael Caine and Ben Kingsley.

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Punchline" (†).

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Oct. 27: "The Kiss" (Pen Densham), with Joanna Pacula.
From Oct. 28: "The Gods Must Be Crazy" (1979; Jamie Uys).

SUTTON, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Things Change" (David Mamet), with Don Ameche and Joe Mantegna.

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Mystic Pizza" (Donald Petrie), with Julia Roberts, Annabeth Gish, and Lili Taylor.

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Bird" (†).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Alien Nation" (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.
Theatre 2: "Clara's Heart" (Robert Mulligan), with Whoopi Goldberg.

D. W. GRIFFITH, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Lair of the White Worm" (Ken Russell).

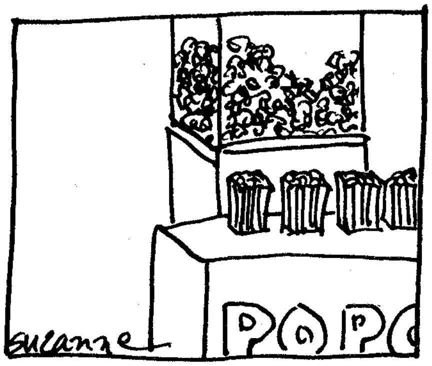
BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Madame Sousatzka" (†).
Theatre 2: "Punchline" (†).

GEMINI I AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 27: "Imagine: John Lennon" (Andrew Solt), a documentary. From Oct. 28: "Feds" (Dan Goldberg), with Rebecca de Mornay and Mary Gross.
Theatre 2: "Bat 21" (Peter Markle), with Gene Hackman and Danny Glover.

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Gorillas in the Mist" (†).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Without a Clue" (Thom Eberhardt), with Michael Caine and Ben Kingsley.
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.



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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 21.

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"The Accused" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Kelly McGillis and Jodie Foster.

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Punchline" (†).

LOEWS ORPHEUM I AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "Bat 21" (Peter Markle), with Gene Hackman and Danny Glover.
Theatre 2: "Halloween 4" (Dwight H. Little).

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Mystic Pizza" (Donald Petrie), with Julia Roberts, Annabeth Gish, and Lili Taylor.
Theatre 2: "Alien Nation" (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM I AND 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 25: "The Boxer and Death" (1962; directed by Peter Solan; in German and Czech). From Oct. 26: "Streams of Consciousness: New American Animation" (†).
Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

BLEECKER ST. CINEMA I AND 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Wings of Desire" ("Der Himmel über Berlin") (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 27: "Married to the Mob" (†). From Oct. 28: To be announced.

WAVERLY I AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Madame Sousatzka" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bird" (†).

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
"The Lair of the White Worm" (Ken Russell).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Punchline" (†).
Theatre 2: "Gorillas in the Mist" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 27: "Babette's Feast" (†). From Oct. 28: The 21st International Tournee of Animation.
Theatre 2: "Bagdad Café" (†).
Theatre 3: "A Winter Tan" (Jackie Burroughs, Louise Clark, John Frizzell, John Walker, and Aerlyn Weissman).
Theatre 4: "Matador" (†).

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 27: "Clara's Heart" (Robert Mulligan), with Whoopi Goldberg. From Oct. 28: "Feds" (Dan Goldberg), with Rebecca de Mornay and Mary Gross.
Theatre 3: "Halloween 4" (Dwight H. Little).

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Without a Clue" (Thom Eberhardt), with Michael Caine and Ben Kingsley.

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Last Temptation of Christ" (†).

FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through Oct. 27: The 21st International Tournee of Animation.
From Oct. 28: To be announced.

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Little Dorrit" (Christine Edzard), with Derek Jacobi and Alec Guinness. A six-hour film, shown in two parts.

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Madame Sousatzka" (†).

CARNEGIE SCREENING ROOM, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
Through Oct. 27: "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" ("L'Ami de Mon Amie") (†).
From Oct. 28: "Film Actress" (Kon Ichikawa; in Japanese).

PARIS, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Another Woman" (†).

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

LOEWS PARAMOUNT, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"The Accused" (Jonathan Kaplan), with Kelly McGillis and Jodie Foster.

LINCOLN PLAZA I, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Thin Blue Line" (†).
Theatre 2: "Salaam Bombay!" (Mira Nair; in Hindi).
Theatre 3: "Red Sorghum" (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).

CINEMA STUDIO I AND 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie" (Marcel Ophuls; in English, French, German, and Spanish), a four-hour-and-twenty-seven-minute documentary.
Theatre 2: "Imagine: John Lennon" (Andrew Solt), a documentary.

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Gorillas in the Mist" (†).

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Without a Clue" (Thom Eberhardt), with Michael Caine and Ben Kingsley.
Theatre 2: "Mystic Pizza" (Donald Petrie), with Julia Roberts, Annabeth Gish, and Lili Taylor.
Theatre 3: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Theatre 4: "The Kiss" (Pen Densham), with Joanna Pacula.
Theatre 5: "Bat 21" (Peter Markle), with Gene Hackman and Danny Glover.
Theatre 6: "Bird" (†).

METRO CINEMA I AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 27: "Dead Ringers" (†). From Oct. 28: "Feds" (Dan Goldberg), with Rebecca de Mornay and Mary Gross.
Theatre 2: "Punchline" (†).

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Alien Nation" (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.
Theatre 2: "Clara's Heart" (Robert Mulligan), with Whoopi Goldberg.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Halloween 4" (directed by Dwight H. Little).
Theatre 2: "Bat 21" (Peter Markle), with Gene Hackman and Danny Glover.
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 27: "Halloween 4." From Oct. 28: "Feds" (Dan Goldberg),

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

with Rebecca de Mornay and Mary Gross.

Theatre 4: "Alien Nation" (Graham Baker), with James Caan and Mandy Patinkin.

Theatre 5: "Die Hard" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Kiss" (Pen Densham), with Joanna Pacula.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
"Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Theatre 3: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Theatre 4: "Married to the Mob" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Elvira: Mistress of the Dark" (James Signorelli), with Elvira.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
"Gorillas in the Mist" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Clara's Heart" (Robert Mulligan), with Whoopi Goldberg.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 27: "Dead Ringers" (†). From Oct. 28: To be announced.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Punchline" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Oct. 24: "You Can't Take It with You" (1938; directed by Frank Capra), with Jean Arthur, James Stewart, Lionel Barrymore, and Edward Arnold; and "I Love You Again" (1940; W. S. Van Dyke), with Myrna Loy and William Powell.

Oct. 25-26: "The Voice of the Turtle" (1947; Irving Rapper), with Eleanor Parker, Ronald Reagan, and Eve Arden; and "The More the Merrier" (1943; George Stevens), with Jean Arthur, Joel McCrea, and Charles Coburn.

Oct. 27: "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek" (1944; Preston Sturges), with Betty Hutton and Eddie Bracken; and "Christmas in July" (†).

From Oct. 28: A week-long program of sixteen new Spanish films.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Oct. 25: "Koyaanisqatsi" (1983; Godfrey Reggio); and "Powaqqatsi" (1988; Godfrey Reggio).

Oct. 26-27: "Meduses" (1987; Christopher Frank); and "Happily Ever After" (1986; Bruno Barreto; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), with Regine Duarte and Paulo Castelli.

Oct. 28-29: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1975; Miloš Forman), with Jack Nicholson, Louise Fletcher, and Will Sampson; and "Five Easy Pieces" (1970; Bob Rafelson), with Jack Nicholson.

Oct. 30: "Siberiade" (1979; Andrei Mikhalkov-Konchalovsky; in Russian).

Oct. 31-Nov. 1: "Shy People" (1988; Andrei Konchalovsky), with Jill Clayburgh and Barbara Hershey; and "The Stunt Man" (1980; Richard Rush), with Peter O'Toole, Steve Railsback, Barbara Hershey, Allen Goorwitz, and Alex Rocco.

From Nov. 2: "Love Is a Dog from Hell" ("Crazy Love;" 1987; Dominique Deruddere; in Flemish); and "Barfly" (1987; Barbet Schroeder), with Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway.

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Oct. 24: "Blues in the Night" (1941; Anatole Litvak), with Priscilla Lane, Richard Whorf, and Betty Field; and "Orchestra Wives" (1942; Archie Mayo), with Ann Rutherford and George Montgomery.

Oct. 25: "Absolute Beginners" (1986; Julien Temple), with Eddie O'Connell and Patsy Kensit; and "Steve Lacy: Lift the Bandstand" (1985; Peter Bull).

Oct. 26: "Memories of Duke" (1980; Gary Keys), a concert film of Duke Ellington and his band touring Mexico in 1968; and "A Brother with Perfect Timing" (1987; Chris Austin).

Oct. 27: "Chicago Blues" (1972; Harley Cokliss); and "Blues for Central Avenue" (1986; Lois Shelton).

Oct. 28-29: "Art Blakey: The Jazz Messenger" (1987; Dick Fontaine and Pat Hartley); and three short jazz films directed by Dick Fontaine.

Oct. 30: A program of films of jazz stars at Birdland.

Oct. 31: "The Sound of Jazz" (1957; Jack Smight); and "All Night Long" (1962; Basil Rearden), with Patrick McGoohan.

Nov. 1: "Round Midnight" (1986; Bertrand Tavernier), with Dexter Gordon; and "Jazz in Exile" (1978; Chuck France).

Nov. 2: "Saxophone Colossus" (1986; Robert Mugge); "Machito: A Latin Jazz Legacy" (1985; Carlos Ortiz); and "Sun Ra: A Joyful Noise" (1980; Robert Mugge).

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Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Oct. 24: "The Last Waltz" (1978; Martin Scorsese), with The Band; and "Raging Bull" (1980; Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, and Joe Pesci.

Oct. 25: "Murder" (1930; Alfred Hitchcock), with Herbert Marshall and Norah Baring; and "Number Seventeen" (1932; Alfred Hitchcock), with Leon M. Lion and Anne Grey.

Oct. 26-27: "In the Realm of the Senses" (1977; Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese), with Eiko Matsuda and Tatsuya Fuji; and "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959; Alain Resnais; in French), with Emmanuèle Riva and Eiji Okada.

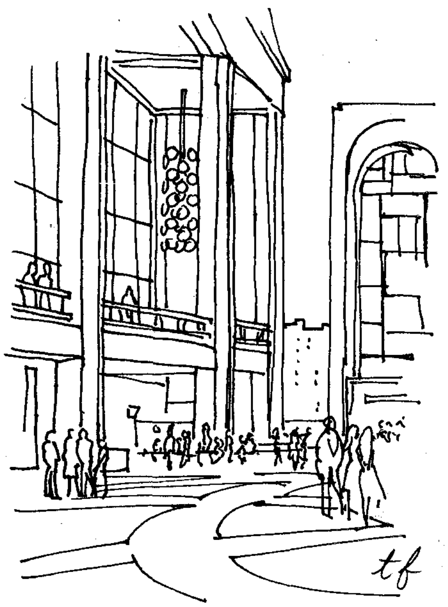
Oct. 28-29: "The Godfather" (1972; Francis Ford Coppola), with Marlon Brando and Al Pacino; and "The Godfather, Part II" (1974; Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino, Robert Duvall, Diane Keaton, and Robert De Niro.

Oct. 30: "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" (1923; Wallace Worsley; a silent film), with Lon Chaney; and "The Phantom of the Opera" (1925; Rupert Julian; a silent film), with Lon Chaney.

Oct. 31: "White Zombie" (1932; Victor Halperin), with Bela Lugosi and Madge Bellamy; "The Vampire Bat" (1933; Frank Strayer), with Lionel Atwill, Fay Wray, and Melvyn Douglas; "One Frightened Night" (1935; Christy Cabanne), with Charley Grapewin, Hedda Hopper, and Wallace Ford; and "The Crime of Dr. Crespi" (1935; John Auer), with Erich von Stroheim.

Nov. 1: "The Criminal Code" (1931; Howard Hawks), with Walter Huston, Phillips Holmes, and Constance Cummings; and "Convicted" (1950; Henry Levin), with Glenn Ford and Broderick Crawford.

Nov. 2: "The Last Picture Show" (1971; Peter Bogdanovich), with Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Ben Johnson, and Cloris Leachman; and "Paper Moon" (1973; Peter Bogdanovich), with Ryan O'Neal and Tatum O'Neal.



Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Oct. 24: "A Man and a Woman" (1966; Claude Lelouch; in French), with Anouk Aimée and Jean-Louis Trintignant; and "Live for Life" (1967; Claude Lelouch; in French), with Yves Montand and Candice Bergen.

Oct. 25: "Holiday" (1930; Edward H. Griffith), with Ann Harding, Mary Astor, Robert Ames, and Edward Everett Horton; and "No More Orchids" (1932; Walter Lang), with Carole Lombard and Walter Connolly.

Oct. 26: "Made for Each Other" (1939; John Cromwell), with Carole Lombard, James Stewart, and Charles Coburn; and "Swing High, Swing Low" (1937; Mitchell Leisen), with Carole Lombard, Fred MacMurray, Jean Dixon, and Charles Butterworth.

Oct. 27: "Five Graves to Cairo" (†) and "A Foreign Affair" (†).

Oct. 28-29: "All About Eve" (1950; Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, Hugh Marlowe, Celeste Holm, and Thelma Ritter; and "Sunset Boulevard" (1950; Billy Wilder), with Gloria Swanson, William Holden, and Erich von Stroheim.

Oct. 30: "The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp" (1943; Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger), with Roger Livesey, Anton Walbrook, and Deborah Kerr.

Oct. 31: "Dracula's Daughter" (1936; Lambert Hillyer), with Otto Kruger and Gloria Holden; and "The Werewolf of London" (1935; Stuart Walker), with Henry Hull.

Nov. 1: "Julius Caesar" (1953; Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with James Mason, John Gielgud, and Marlon Brando; and "The Epic That Never Was" (†).

Nov. 2: "Jules and Jim" (1962; François Truffaut; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner, and Henri Serre; and "The 400 Blows" (1959; François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

Theatre 1: Oct. 24 at 2:30: "The Reckoning" (1969; directed by Jack Gold), with Nicol Williamson and Rachel Roberts. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 6: "A Private Enterprise" (1975; Peter K. Smith), with Salmaan Peer, Marc Zuber, and Ramon Sinha. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 2: "It Happened Here" (1966; Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo), with Pauline Murray, Sebastian Shaw, and Fiona Leland; and "Winstanley" (1975; Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo), with Miles Halliwell, Jerome Willis, and Terry Higgins. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 6: "Four in the Morning" (1965; Anthony Simmons), with Judi Dench, Brian Phelan, and Ann Lynn. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 2:30: "Bronco Bullfrog" (1969; Barney Platts-Mills), with Del Walker, Anne Gooding, and Sam Shepherd. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 6: "Pressure" (1975; Horace Ove), with Herbert Norville and Oscar James. . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 2:30: "Mamma Roma" (1962; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Anna Magnani, Ettore Garofalo, and Franco Citti. . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 6 and Oct. 29 at 2: "L'Onorevole Angelina" (1947; Luigi Zampa; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Anna Magnani, Nando Bruno, and Ave Ninchi. . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 5: "Mamma Roma." . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 2: "Campo de'Fiori" (1943; Mario Bonnard; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Anna Magnani, Aldo Fabrizi, and Peppino De Filippo. . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 5: "Open City" (1945; Roberto Rossellini; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Anna Magnani, Aldo Fabrizi, and Marcello Pagliero. . . . ¶ Oct. 31 at 2:30: "Tempo Massimo" (1934; Mario Mattoli; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Anna Magnani, Vittorio De Sica, Milly, and Camillo Pilotto. . . . ¶ Oct. 31 at 6: "Doctor Beware" (1941; Vittorio De Sica; in Italian, with English subtitles), with Anna Magnani, Adriana Benetti, and De Sica. . . . ¶ Nov. 1 at 2:30: "Open City." . . . ¶ Nov. 1 at 6: "Campo de'Fiori."

THEATRE 2: Oct. 24 at 6:30: A program of films by Vincent Grenier, who will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 3 and 6: "All My Life" (1966; Bruce Baillie), "Castro Street" (1966; Bruce Baillie), "Pluto" (1967; James Herbert), and "Wavelength" (1967; Michael Snow). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 3 and 6: "A Singing Stream" (1987; Tom Davenport), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 2:30 and 5:30: "Faces" (1968; John Cassavetes), with John Marley, Gena Rowlands, Lynn Carlin, and Seymour Cassel. . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 2:30 and 5:30: "Z" (1969; Costa-Gavras; in French, with English subtitles), with Yves Montand, Irene Papas, and Jean-Louis Trintignant. . . . ¶ Nov. 1 at 2 and 6: "Pictures from the Unconscious" (1988; Leon Hirszman), a documentary.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)

RIKLIS THEATRE: Oct. 26 at 2:30: "The Man Who Envied Women" (1985; Yvonne Rainer). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 3: "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" (1988; Christine Choy and Renee Tajima). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 8: "My Brother's Wedding" (1983; Charles Burnett). . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 2: A program of three films by Larry Gottheim, who will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 5: "Suzanne, Suzanne" (1982; Camille Billops); and "Bless Their Little Hearts" (1984), directed by Billie Woodberry, who will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 8: "To a Random . . ." (1986; Michael Burlingame); and "Screamplay" (1984; Rufus Butler Seder). . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 1: "Aqui Se Lo Halla" (1983; Lee Sokol); and "Soft Fiction" (1979; Chick Strand). . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 2:30: A program of eight short films, including four by Lewis Klahr, who will be present. . . . ¶ Nov. 2 at 3: "Bell Diamond" (1987; Jon Jost).

WARNER COMMUNICATIONS SCREENING ROOM: Oct. 26 from 1:15 to 4:45, Oct. 27 from 1:15 to 4:45, Oct. 28 from 1:15 to 7:45, Oct. 29 from 10:15 to 7:45, and Oct. 30 from 10:15 to noon: "Five Year Diary," the concluding segments of a forty-hour film, accompanied by live narration and readings by Anne Robertson. . . . ¶ Nov. 2 at 1:30: "Soft Fiction" (1979; Chick Strand).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the **JONAS MEKAS THEATRE** or the **MAYA DEREN THEATRE:** Oct. 24 at 6:30: "The Female Patriot" (1979; Alexander Kluge; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 8: A program of films by Stan Brakhage. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 8:30: "Strong Man Ferdinand" (1975-76; Alexander Kluge; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 6:30: "The Candidate" (1979-80; Alexander Kluge; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 7: A second program of films by Stan Brakhage. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 9: A program of short films by Alexander Kluge. . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 6:30: "War and Peace" (1982-83; Alexander Kluge; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 8: "Zorns Lemma" (1970; Hollis Frampton). . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 9: "Germany in Autumn" (1978; Alexander Kluge; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 6:30: "The Power of Emotion" (1933; Alexander Kluge; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 8: A program of films by Robert Breer. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 8:30 and Oct. 28 at 7: "The Blind Director" (1985; Alexander Kluge; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 8: A program of films by Hollis Frampton. . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 9: "The Power of Emotion." . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 10: A third program of films by Stan Brakhage. . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 3: "The Female Patriot." . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 6: "The Candidate." . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 8: A second program of films by Robert Breer. . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 9: "War and Peace." . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 10: The second Hollis Frampton program. . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 3: "In Danger and Dire Distress, the Middle of the Road Leads to Death" (1974; Alexander Kluge; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 6: "The Candidate." . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 7: "Hapax Legomena" (1971-72; Hollis Frampton). . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 9: "The Female Patriot." . . . ¶ Nov. 1 at 8 and 10: "Come Back, Africa" (1960; Lionel Rogosin), a semidocumentary film. . . . ¶ Nov. 1 at 8:30: "Prelude" (1961) and "Dog Star Man" (1962-64), both directed by Stan Brakhage. . . . ¶ Nov. 2 at 8 and 10: "Come Back, Africa." . . . ¶ Nov. 2 at 8:30: "Zorns Lemma."

COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA, 41 White St. (925-2111)—Oct. 24 at 7: "Mean Streets" (1973; Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 7: Program to be announced. . . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 7: "Hungarian Rhapsody" (1983; Miklós Jancsó; in Hungarian, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 7: "The Bird with the Crystal Plumage" (1969; Dario Argento), with Tony Muscante and Suzy Kendall. . . . ¶ Oct. 28-30 at 8: A series of films by Valie Export. . . . ¶ Oct. 31 at 7: "New York Portrait Chapter II" (1981; Peter Hutton); and "Sunrise" (1927; F. W. Murnau; a silent film), with George O'Brien and Janet Gaynor. . . . ¶ Nov. 1 at 7: "Les Cousins" (1959; Claude Chabrol; in French, with English subtitles), with Gérard Blain and Jean-Claude Brialy. . . . ¶ Nov. 2 at 7: "The Nice Neighbor" (1979; Zsolt Kézki-Kovács; in Hungarian, with English subtitles), with László Szabó.

FRENCH INSTITUTE–ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE, 22 E. 60th St. (355-6100)—Oct. 26 at 2, 6, and 9: "The Nun" (1965; Jacques Rivette; in French, with English subtitles), with Anna Karina.

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Oct. 28 at 6:30 and 8:30: "The Great Department Store Robbery" (1988; Azuma Morisaki; in Japanese, with English subtitles).

ASIA SOCIETY, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-2742)—A program of new Chinese films, in Mandarin, with Chinese and English subtitles. Oct. 24 at 6:30: "King of the Children" (1987; Chen Kaige). . . . Oct. 25 at 6:30: "Hibiscus Town" (1986; Xie Jin). . . . Oct. 26 at 6:30: "The One and the Eight" (1984; Zhang Junzhao). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 6:30: A showing of the documentary "New Chinese Cinema" (1988; Tony Rayns), followed by a panel discussion with directors Chen Kaige and Xie Jin, moderated by Tony Rayns.

REEL PIECES: FILM AS A COLLABORATIVE ART—A series of films and lectures. Oct. 27 at 8:15: "The Killing Fields" (1984; Roland Joffé), with Sam Waterston and Haing S. Ngor. David Puttnam, former chairman of Columbia Pictures, will be present. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Terrence Rafferty.)

ANOTHER WOMAN—Directed by Woody Allen. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Paris.)

BABETTE'S FEAST—In a village on Denmark's gray, blustery Jutland peninsula, sometime in the eighteen-eighties, Babette (Stéphane Audran), the French servant of a pair of elderly unmarried sisters (Birgitte Federspiel and Bodil Kjer), prepares a special dinner for her employers and their guests—a lavish, one-time-only orgy of haute cuisine served to a group of devout Lutherans who are used to receiving the Lord's bounty in the form of grim little slabs of boiled fish. Adapting one of Isak Dinesen's "Anecdotes of Destiny," Gabriel Axel, the writer-director, tells this simple tale simply. He establishes a lulling, bedtime-story tone right from the start, perhaps too successfully: our eyelids begin to seem very heavy after twenty minutes or so. The whole thing turns out to be about the consolations of art, and the union of "righteousness and bliss." The film is more righteous than blissful: a more austere celebration of the pleasures of the senses would be difficult to imagine. In Danish and French. —T.R. (Quad Cinema.)

BAGDAD CAFÉ—After an argument with her husband on a godforsaken stretch of highway at the edge of the Mojave Desert, a fat German tourist named Jasmin (Marianne Sägebrecht) checks into a crummy motel attached to the equally crummy Bagdad Café. This movie, the first in English by the German director Percy Adlon (whose 1985 "Sugarbaby" was also a vehicle for Sägebrecht), is filled with eccentrics who are apparently meant to be lovable. The rather precious conceit of the film is that Jasmin somehow brings the outcast characters together in a kind of extended family; by the end, the Bagdad Café has been transformed into a popular roadside cabaret, with everyone contributing a specialty (Jasmin does magic tricks). The American performers are trapped in a movie that treats them as merely exotic—waxwork grotesques waiting to be animated by a mysterious German touch. Eleonore Adlon and Christopher Doherty collaborated with the director on the screenplay. With CCH Pounder, Jack Palance, and Christine Kaufmann.—T.R. (Quad Cinema; through Oct. 27.)

BIRD—Clint Eastwood, who directed, gives the life of the master of jazz improvisation—the bebop alto saxophonist Charlie Parker—the art-film treatment: flashbacks, rain, darkness, and a running time of two hours and forty-one minutes. With the film flashing back and forth, you can't get the hang of Parker's life story, and you don't come out with much understanding of his achievement or what made him a legend—the potent archetype of the self-destructive jazz artist. As Parker, Forest Whitaker trudges off to his gigs like a jazz version of Willy Loman; he's always fouling up—boozing and doping and smashing things. Whitaker gives a richly felt performance, yet he comes across as just a genial big blob of a fellow who can't get his life together. Some of his scenes with Diane Venora (as Chan Parker) have tension and a pricklish originality, and a few of his scenes with Michael Zelniker (as Red Rodney) have something comic and unresolved in them—Parker shows a streak of "just kidding" sadism. But mostly it's an earnest, lifeless movie. Joel Oliansky wrote the script; the cast includes Samuel E. Wright as Dizzy Gillespie. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/17/88.) (Plaza, Waverly, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

BOYFRIENDS AND GIRLFRIENDS ("L'Ami de Mon Amie")—The sixth, and last, in Eric Rohmer's series of "Comedies and Proverbs" is a light romantic comedy set in Cergy-Pontoise, an overdesigned and self-contained modern suburb of Paris. In this bourgeois Forest of Arden, four completely unremarkable young people—two women, two men—reshuffle their affections so that each winds up with the "right" partner in the end. It's essentially the same leisurely comedy of self-knowledge that Rohmer has been making for nearly twenty years, but this time he treats his themes with a frivolous, casual air. He takes pleasure in the cleanness and brightness of this world, in the contented buzz of shoppers and office workers and Sunday picnickers, in the forthright way his characters pursue their comforts. With Emmanuelle Chaulet, Sophie Renoir, François-Eric Gendron, and Eric Viellard. In French.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Carnegie Screening Room; through Oct. 27.)

CHRISTMAS IN JULY (1940)—Preston Sturges wrote and directed this little slapstick romance when he was just warming up as a director. Dick Powell and Ellen Drew are the young couple whose luck turns when he thinks he has won $25,000 in a slogan contest. It's agreeable enough—it's rather sweet, actually—but it lacks the full-fledged Sturges lunacy. (Biograph Cinema; Oct. 27.)

DEAD RINGERS—David Cronenberg's psychological thriller tells a lurid story with chilling, clinical austerity. It's about identical twins, Beverly and Elliot Mantle (both played by Jeremy Irons), who have shared everything about their lives since childhood: they live together, practice gynecology together, and sleep with the same women. They look at the world and see only each other; they're dying of self-reflection. When

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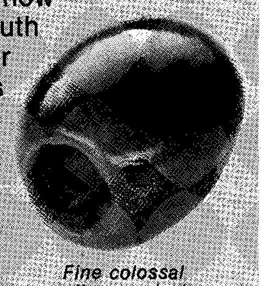

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

IN BRIEF—Cont'd

the more sensitive of the twins, Bev, tries to break the pattern, to establish some real emotional link to the world outside, the attempt is doomed. He falls in love with an actress named Claire Niveau (Geneviève Bujold), but he can't handle the pressures and uncertainties of an adult relationship. He retreats into drug addiction and madness, and carries his brother with him. Irons' performance is daring: he turns himself into a nightmarish cartoon of decadence. As usual, Cronenberg's work gleams with intelligence, and goes as far as it can go. But this movie about narcissism keeps turning further and further inward, and it makes us do the same. It affects us like a particularly upsetting visit to the doctor. The script, by the director and Norman Snider, is loosely based on the novel "Twins," by Bari Wood and Jack Geasland. Cinematography by Peter Suschitzky; the excellent score is by Howard Shore.—T.R. (10/3/88) (Metro Cinema, and National Twin; through Oct. 27.)

Die Hard—A formula action picture, but with the extra-potency formula. It has the sweatiest hero, the most sinister bad guys (with the thickest foreign accents), the silliest plot twists, the loudest explosions, the most gratuitous bursts of machine-gun fire. Bruce Willis plays John McClane, a New York cop battling a group of European terrorists who are holding his wife (Bonnie Bedelia) and her co-workers hostage on the thirtieth floor of a gleaming L.A. skyscraper (actually the Fox Plaza in Century City). The action is so grandiose and relentless that it's funny. The director, John McTiernan, has the right style for this sort of cheerfully stupid, super-kinetic comic-book violence. The problem with "Die Hard" isn't so much the physical overkill of the production as the emotional overkill of the script (by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza, from a novel by Roderick Thorp). By the end, there has been so much onscreen applause for McClane that the picture's "humanity" seems fake, like Oscar-night sentimentality. Also with Alan Rickman, who gives the character of the terrorists' leader a wonderful slimy elegance.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Criterion Center.)

The Epic That Never Was (1965)—Bill Duncalf's documentary, made for the BBC, about the circumstances that caused the 1937 Alexander Korda production of "I, Claudius," based on Robert Graves' "I, Claudius" and "Claudius the God," to be abandoned midway. The temperamental problems between the star, Charles Laughton, and the director, Josef von Sternberg, were clearly enormous, and the production was hit by a series of disasters; however, from the look of the footage that is included, the world did not lose a masterpiece: The interviews with survivors of the debacle (such as Merle Oberon, who was supposed to play Messalina) are very entertaining. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Nov. 1.)

A Fish Called Wanda—This caper comedy promises to embody the best of two different styles of British humor: its director, the seventy-seven-year-old Charles Crichton, made "The Lavender Hill Mob," one of the greatest of the Ealing comedies, and its writer, executive producer, and star, the towering John Cleese, was a member of the Monty Python group and the creator of the hilarious television series "Fawlty Towers." Its main characters are a very proper London barrister (Cleese) and three jewel thieves: a crafty, sexy American woman named Wanda (Jamie Lee Curtis); another American, Otto (Kevin Kline), who's violently Anglophobic and dumb as dirt; and Ken (the ex-Pythonite Michael Palin), a deranged stutterer who's perfectly happy to bump off old ladies but becomes inconsolable at the death of a small dog or a tropical fish. The movie has a fair number of laughs, but Crichton's direction is too drab and poky for the material. Every time "Wanda" threatens to take off into the realm of insane, head-splitting farce, as "Fawlty Towers" so often did, something seems to drag it down—some impulse toward stability and restraint, at odds with the script's spirit of manic invention.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, and Loews New York Twin.)

Five Graves to Cairo (1943)—Erich von Stroheim struts his stuff as Field Marshall Erwin Rommel in an ingeniously plotted melodrama about why the Germans lost at El Alamein. Billy Wilder, who directed and, with Charles Brackett, also wrote the script, based on a play by Lajos Biro, must have had something a little grander in mind; the cleverness lacks lustre. With Franchot Tone, Anne Baxter, Peter Van Eyck, and Akim Tamiroff. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 27.)

A Foreign Affair (1948)—This deliberately cynical political farce by the team of Charles Brackett (producer) and Billy Wilder (director) often seems on the verge of being funny, but the humor is too clumsily forced. As Phoebe Frost, a spinster congresswoman from Iowa investigating the morale of the American forces in Occupied Berlin, Jean Arthur looks far from her best; she hasn't much to do but act primly shocked at corruption, and then, turning womanly, get into a glittering evening gown, put a flower in her hair, and go after an Army captain—lacklustre John Lund. Marlene Dietrich, as Phoebe's rival—worldly-wise Erika von Schlutow, former mistress of a high-ranking Nazi and now a singer in a cellar called the Lorelei—comes off rather better. Written by Brackett, Wilder, Richard Breen, and Robert Harari. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 27.)

Gorillas in the Mist—Sigourney Weaver as the anthropologist Dian Fossey, in what seems meant to be a triumphant epic about an activist heroine who made a difference. (A title at the close tells us that Fossey saved the mountain gorillas from extinction). Weaver's physical strength alone is inspiring here, and there's a new freedom in her acting. She's so vivid that you immediately feel Fossey's will and drive. But Michael Apted, who directed, has an indeterminate approach to some of the key incidents; he doesn't locate a dramatic core in Anna Hamilton Phelan's script. The movie is reasonably faithful to Fossey's ruthless, half-crazed side and it's quite watchable, but it's disappointing. It belongs to the past of movies rather than to the modern era. The Maurice Jarre music is a definite negative factor; another is the use of the head tracker as the symbolic dignity and conscience of Africa. Despite the subject, the movie can't be taken seriously. It's a feminist version of "King Kong"—now it's the gorillas who do the screaming. With Bryan Brown, Julie Harris, John Omirah Miluwi as the tracker, and Iain Cuthbertson, who's casual and rather humorous as Dr. Louis Leakey. (10/17/88) (Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Regency, and Movieland. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema; through Oct. 27.)

The Last Temptation of Christ—Martin Scorsese's film is based on an intense, rather ponderous novel by Nikos Kazantzakis that portrays Christ as a tormented prophet who has to choose between his human nature and his divine nature—who in order to fulfill his role as redeemer must reject the overpowering temptation to be merely a man. If we respond to anything in this movie it's to the idea of Scorsese wrestling with Kazantzakis's conception, thrashing manfully among the tangles of the novel's dense prose, trying to isolate some clear, intelligible meaning from this religious fever-dream. Scorsese hasn't managed to come up with a consistent visual style for the story, and the movie's intensity, over a span of two hours and forty minutes, is sputtering, fitful. The scenes meant to evoke the natural—the human—side of the story don't have much charge, and most of the actors look uncomfortable. (The drab modern idiom of Paul Schrader's dialogue is at least part of the problem.) This movie isn't a sacrilege; it's just an honorable mistake. With Willem Dafoe as Jesus, Harvey Keitel as Judas, Barbara Hershey as Mary Magdalene, and David Bowie as Pontius Pilate. Peter Gabriel composed the music.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Ziegfeld.)

Madame Sousatzka—With Shirley MacLaine, directed by John Schlesinger. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Baronet, Waverly, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Married to the Mob—Angela (Michelle Pfeiffer), the heroine of Jonathan Demme's crazy comedy, is married to an up-and-coming suburban gangster known as Frank the Cucumber (Alec Baldwin), and she doesn't feel good about her life; she's avid for ordinariness. When Frank is murdered by his boss, Tony the Tiger (Dean Stockwell), Angela gives away virtually the entire contents of her Long Island house and moves herself and her reluctant son into a cramped Lower East Side apartment, hoping that the mob will forget about her. Unfortunately, Tony the Tiger has the hots for her, the F.B.I. is tailing her, and Tony's insanely jealous wife, Connie (Mercedes Ruehl), is on the warpath. Pfeiffer's extraordinary performance is the movie's major pleasure; she makes both Angela's toughness and her goodness believable, funny, and touching. As usual, Demme is great at providing incidental pleasures, including a terrific score (with original music by David Byrne) and a superbly eccentric cast that also features Matthew Modine, Trey Wilson, Joan Cusack, Tracey Walter, and David Johansen (as a priest). The vibrant cinematography is by Tak Fujimoto.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Embassy. . . . ¶ Bleecker St. Cinema; through Oct. 27.)

MATADOR—Hugely entertaining. Everything is eroticized in this lush, clownish comedy by Pedro Almodóvar. The characters act out their wildest fantasies—or, like the handsome, wealthy young virgin Ángel (Antonio Banderas), try to act them out—and embarrass themselves. Ángel is training to be a bullfighter, but he faints at the sight of blood. He's such a supreme fantasist that he hallucinates and sees what happened in a recent series of murders—unluckily, he's fantasist enough to think that he committed them. It's all sumptuously sick and funny. Assumpta Serna plays a culmination of the scarlet-woman tradition of Joan Crawford, Rita Hayworth, Ava Gardner, and Anouk Aimée—all those flaming man-killers with their too vibrant smiles. And Almodóvar himself appears as a mad-genius couturier who messes up his curly hair before he appears in public. Also with Nacho Martínez, Eusebio Poncela, Carmen Maura, Eva Cobo, Julieta Serrano, and Chus Lampreave. Written by the director and Jesús Ferrero; cinematography by Ángel Luis Fernández. In Spanish. (5/16/88) (Quad Cinema.)

PUNCHLINE—With Sally Field and Tom Hanks, directed by David Seltzer. (Reviewed in this issue.) (34th St. East, Coronet, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Metro Cinema, and Warner.)

STREAMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS: NEW AMERICAN ANIMATION—This thirteen-film, eighty-seven-minute compilation of recent work by independent animators begins with a five-minute blast of inspired lunacy by Sally Cruikshank and ends with Jim Blashfield's darkly funny domestic nightmare "Suspicious Circumstances." Cruikshank is one of the few independents who are really interested in making *cartoons*. Her "Face Like a Frog" is a delirious romp through a Crayola-colored fun house, and its centerpiece is a deeply silly musical number called "Don't Go Near the Basement," performed by a suave fish: the film is like studio-era animation seen in distorting mirrors by a naughty-minded, giggly child. Blashfield's movie uses shifting arrangements of photocopied images to tell the story of the disappearance of an ordinary middle-aged man. Waking in the middle of the night, this pajama-clad husband enters a strange world in which household items (scissors, potatoes) float through the air and illustrations of "futuristic" vehicles from *Popular Mechanics* jump off the page. This twelve-minute exercise in kitschy surrealism is hilariously unpredictable, and the Xerox-collage technique gives the images a rich, mysterious texture. (If the style looks familiar, it's because Blashfield has since used it in his distinctive music videos for Talking Heads, Paul Simon, and Joni Mitchell.) In between Cruikshank and Blashfield, though, the program is mostly heavy going. The compilers, David Ehrlich and George Griffin (both of whom are also represented here), seem inclined toward arty, "mythic" stuff: for long stretches, we squirm with the kind of embarrassment we feel at an evening of bad, deadly-solemn modern dance. The only other films that rouse us from this stupor are Joanna Priestly's "Voices," a witty portrait of the animator as a young neurotic, and Joey Ahlbum's graffiti-style "Parade."—T.R. (Film Forum 1; starting Oct. 26.)

THE THIN BLUE LINE—Errol Morris's trancelike, almost lyrical documentary tells the story of a 1976 cop-killing in Dallas and examines the process by which a man who is almost certainly innocent was convicted and sentenced to death for the crime. The movie's form is circular, spiralling, its obsessive, repetitive visual motifs echoed in Philip Glass's hauntingly monotonous score. In showing us the lies, the fears, the social pressures, the ulterior motives, the stubbornness, and the plain confusion that combined to produce the case against the unfortunate Randall Adams—whose fate is worthy of a Borges hero—Morris seems to be investigating not just this squalid murder but the very nature of untruth. His style is occasionally too fancy and elliptical for absolute clarity, but this is a powerful and thrillingly strange movie. Morris—who actually uncovered new evidence in the course of making the film—has turned Randall Adams' case into a kind of tabloid poetry, a meditation on uncertainty and the fascination of violence.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

TUCKER: THE MAN AND HIS DREAM—There are marvellous moments throughout Francis Ford Coppola's biography of Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges), a Midwestern inventor/entrepreneur who tried, and failed, to manufacture and market an innovative new automobile in the late forties. The style of "Tucker" is hyped-up forties Hollywood, and we believe, at first, that its intent is ironic, that Coppola is playing with America's optimistic, movie- and magazine-fuelled vision of itself in the postwar years. Bafflingly, this style doesn't change, or even modulate, when Tucker's bold enterprise starts to come apart, undermined by pressure from the government and the big three auto companies; the movie remains grandiose and artificial—all golden lighting and low, heroic angles. "Tucker" collapses in nostalgia, bad faith, and Capra-style populism. Also with Joan Allen, Martin Landau, Frederic Forrest, Mako, Lloyd Bridges (uncredited), and Dean Stockwell, who does a lovely, mysterious cameo as Howard Hughes. Screenplay by Arnold Schulman and David Seidler; cinematography by Vittorio Storaro.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Embassy 1.)

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT—This manic comedy, in which animated cartoon characters interact with live actors, is an amazing feat of entertainment engineering—like a Disneyland ride or a World's Fair movie. The setting is Los Angeles in 1947, and the screenplay, by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, takes off from the fairly witty conceit that the cartoon characters, called Toons here, are ordinary contract players in the already skewed universe of the Hollywood studio system. These strange creatures become involved in a conventional forties mystery plot, featuring a seedy, hard-drinking private eye (Bob Hoskins). The director, Robert Zemeckis, and his small army of animators and special-effects artists mean to pay homage to the Hollywood animation of the thirties and forties, but the movie doesn't have the right spirit. Technology and plot mechanics labor mightily to evoke an aura of freedom and uninhibited joy—yet there's hardly a spontaneous moment in the film. Also with Christopher Lloyd, Joanna Cassidy, and Stubby Kaye. The funniest Toon, Roger's sireny wife, Jessica, speaks with Kathleen Turner's (uncredited) voice and sings with Amy Irving's. The director of animation was Richard Williams. Adapted, very loosely, from the novel "Who Censored Roger Rabbit?," by Gary K. Wolf.—T.R. (7/11/88) (Embassy.)

WINGS OF DESIRE ("Der Himmel über Berlin")—The director, Wim Wenders, who wrote the script with the collaboration of Peter Handke, has a theme: in an approximation of Rilke's words, "Joy has gone astray." We're told that "when the child was a child" stories held together. Now all we have is fragmentation, entropy. Two angels—Damiel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander)—hover over the bleak, divided city and move among the forlorn Berliners, listening to what's in their minds: listening to the questions about existence that these people ask themselves. Our overhearing what the angels hear—the thoughts chanted on the track, all in even, quiet tones, as grayed out as the sunless skies—works on us like a tranquillizer. Eventually, Damiel falls in love with a beautiful French aerialist (Solveig Dommartin), and gives up his wings. With Peter Falk, who brings some funky warmth to the role of an American movie star, and Curt Bois as a sad-faced old man called Homer. The cinematography (tinted black-and-white, and color) is by Henri Alekan. This Franco-German production is in English, French, and German. (5/30/88) (Bleecker St. Cinema.)

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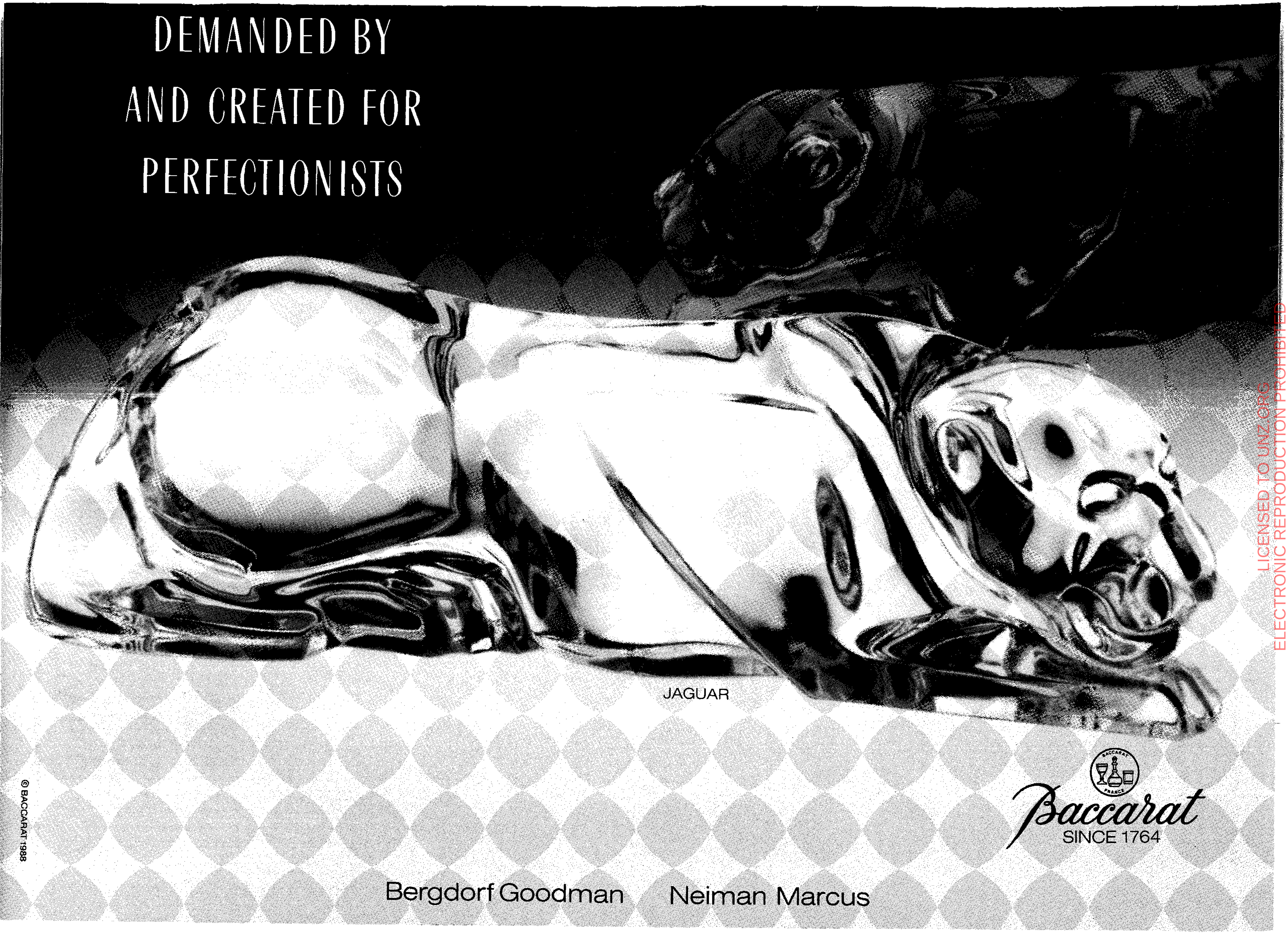
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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A FRIEND writes:

It has taken me nearly seventeen years—the seventeen years since my mother died—to learn that what I miss the most about her is her voice. I can hear it, but I can't tell you much about it beyond what most people know of a mother's voice—that in childhood it fell like consoling shade on a hot ear. The sound of her talking I missed from the first, of course, but more and more now I lack the very way she talked, unadorned and ordinary as it was.

My mother's mother said "pie-anna" for "piano." Like her daughter, she sat at that instrument between intervals of housework and played hymns. Her voice had the reediness that comes after a hard life. I know a lot of things about my grandmother, but they are things a child knows, not adult information. I don't know a single sentence her parents ever spoke to her. My mom learned in school not to say "pie-anna," and I would wager that she never once used a phrase that was uniquely hers. She spoke, as we all do, a temporal dialect—a speech made up in the main of plain, enduring words but also of short-lived phrases that belong to a place and a moment. My dad, for instance, knows all the expressions that mark him as a man who has lived through the eighties. To "go for it" does not mean to him what it would have meant to my mom. If I had told her to "go for it," she would have asked what "it" was, where it was usually kept, and why I couldn't get it myself.

Words abide, mostly, but new phrases enter and old phrases exit, and the changes reflect the way the social landscape alters. Now and then, the grace or wit of a dying phrase strikes home, and we remember it. We compare it sadly with our own thoughtless, habitual manner of talking, and the apparent smallness of the modern spirit seems all the more lamentable. If, for example, at an old-fashioned family table you leaned across to snag the yams from under your sister's nose, you were told you had a "boarding-house reach." It was code for "You're behaving selfishly, like someone who doesn't live in a nice home but has to rent a lonely room and eat with strangers." In short, you were indicted for bad manners, low-class affinities, and antisocial leanings. You don't hear the phrase much anymore. It evoked a Dickensian American city full of fake colonels and sharpers, or a time in the West when laboring men drifted like sand, or a calm, dormered establishment with apron-hem rules of behavior. These images of the rooming-house life disappeared, so we are dropping the expression.

Such phrases were only a wrinkle in time, I know, but I miss hearing them anyway. Sometimes I wish I owned a weekend cottage in the country of old-fashioned speech—a little cabin near my grandma's lexicon. You could stop by for a touch of Depression wisdom and talk some farm talk. You could stay the whole summer after too much TV.

DAddetta

Some people believe that the power of that old-fashioned speech arose from the antique simplicity of living close to the land. Its homey metaphors seemed to spring, like corn, straight up from the ground. Now that we've become a nation of city-dwellers and suburbanites, it sometimes seems that speech is losing its elemental force—that ours is a febrile dialect, with twelve synonyms for "rapid transmission of data" and none for "spring thaw." But the real power of common speech doesn't grow from the soil or from a simple life, or from any other virtue rooted in the past. It stems only from humanness, from the irrepressible urge to talk. To find the casual poetry of language, all you need to do is listen. Any day, anywhere, people will say anything.

All the same, I would still like to go back to the past for a while. Not to meet Mr. Abraham Lincoln or to interview the Buddha. I would like to go to a small Congregational church in Iowa on a Saturday afternoon in May. Outside, my grandfather is mowing the lawn. My grandmother is practicing the Sunday organ, and my mom is sitting in the front pew with her children, singing to herself the words of the hymn that my grandmother, whose name was Nellie, is playing. The oldest child pretends to be coloring, but he is really waiting until the mowing and the music stop and his mother and grandparents start to talk together. He can hardly wait to hear what they will say.

• •

Sheep Shoot

IT'S ten o'clock in the morning, and the sheep are late. Karen Goldman and Robert Boyd, who do public relations for the Brooklyn Academy of

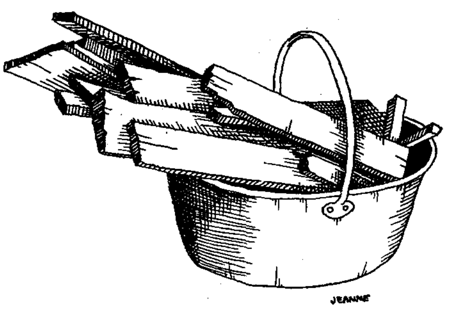
Music, keep looking at their watches and searching the traffic on Tillary Street, near the Brooklyn Bridge, for signs of a Dawn Animal van that is bringing in twelve ungroomed sheep from Orange County for a video shoot. Officer Raymond Cicero, the representative of the Police Department Movie and Television Unit, checks his walkie-talkie and reports that the camera crew is setting up its equipment at the top of the staircase that leads onto the Bridge. The unpunctual sheep, Karen explains, are to be photographed walking along the bridge footpath for a large-scale music-and-performance work, "The Return of the Native," which is a collaboration between Peter Gordon, the founder of the Love of Life Orchestra, and Kit Fitzgerald, a painter and video artist. "Peter has written a tone poem, which will be played on the BAM stage by an ensemble," Karen says. "And Kit will project a mixture of previously taped material—sheep and other rural scenes—and spontaneous images, which she 'paints,' on an enormous screen suspended over the heads of the musicians. She uses a computer video instrument, the visual equivalent of a synthesizer, to create tension between live music and constantly changing live-video images." Consulting her clipboard, Karen tells us that arranging for the sheep shoot was not easy. "I had to get five permits," she says. "The Mayor's office wanted a million-dollar general-liability-insurance bond and releases from Bridge Maintenance and Bridge Operations. The Bureau of Animal Affairs asked us to make sure that the path wouldn't hurt the sheep's feet. And the Police Department made us promise to clean up. Once we'd agreed to the rules, they sent Officer Cicero to help us park the van and get the sheep through traffic."

Officer Cicero tells us that domestic sheep are a cinch. "We've done camels on Broadway and wolves and elephants on Wall Street," he says. "For the elephants, we had to reinforce all the manhole covers, so they wouldn't put their feet through them."

At ten-twenty, the Dawn Animal van appears, and Officer Cicero directs it to park in front of Concord Village, a red brick apartment complex separated from the street by grass and a row of bushes. Bambi Brook and Dennis Kirsch, two animal trainers, get out of the van, open a door in its side, and start decanting spiffy-looking sheep wearing red collars with blue nylon leashes. One by one, the sheep are led down a ramp and tied to iron rings screwed into the side of the van. The flock included three rams—one with long horns curled into a double spiral—and three black-faced ewes, which were referred to as the 4-H sheep, because they were given to the Dawn Animal Agency by 4-H girls who couldn't bear to think of having their pets slaughtered. "Some of the others were rescued from ritual sacrifices or sent to us from animal shelters," Bambi says. As the twelfth sheep hits the street, a large black horse appears in the doorway. "That's David, our rearing horse," says Dennis. "Peter O'Toole rode him in 'My Favorite Year.' He's going to be working in the city later."

Bambi and Dennis gather the sheep into two groups and start down Adams Street toward the bridge footpath. The leashes tangle right away, and the trainers off-load several of the animals to volunteer helpers. We take Heather, a stubborn ewe who lags behind the flock, nipping at the bushes and making strenuous efforts to reach the grass. She is almost as big as a German shepherd and surprisingly strong. To move her in the proper direction, we get behind and push.

By five past eleven, the sheep have crossed Adams Street and are on their way up the footpath, scattering pedestrians and bringing several bicyclists to an abrupt halt. At the first chance, we hand Heather over to Bambi and walk back to join the video crew waiting with cameras at the ready at the Brooklyn end of the bridge. At eleven-forty, Bambi and Dennis turn the sheep around, drop the leashes, and clap their hands to send the flock back down the path toward the cameras. They move slowly, in a ragged formation. Kit Fitzgerald frowns into the eyepiece of her video camera and asks for another take. Dennis corrals the sheep, and Bambi picks up a large blue bucket of oats and sets it near the camera crew. The sheep trot briskly down the path and surround Bambi, who throws them handfuls of oats. "Once more, with feeling," Kit says, with a grin.



By the fifth take, the sheep come thundering down the footpath in a tight bunch and attack the oats. "Real show-biz sheep," Officer Cicero says. Since the bridge traffic can't be closed off, there are occasional interruptions. A jogger tells Bambi that when he saw her from a distance he thought she was running a dog-walking service. A tall man wearing a hooded jacket and baggy sweatpants eyes the flock with alarm. "I ain't going to let them bite me," he says, edging past a ram. Mrs. Gould's fourth-grade class from P.S. 29, in Cobble Hill, comes along, on its way back from a walk to Manhattan, and Bambi introduces the children to Star, who appeared as a lamb in the Radio City Christmas show. "This is terrific," Mrs. Gould says. "When I take the children to the old sheep meadow in Prospect Park, they'll know what it means."

After the shoot ends, at two-thirty, we walk Heather, who is now tired and docile, back to the van. Next to us, walking a ram named Angel, is Peter Gordon, and he tells us that the music he's written for the piece is both tonal and lyrical. "There are four instrumental movements that reflect images of sheep and country landscapes, and they are separated by sung passages taken from the chapter headings of Hardy's novel," he explains. "Some of his language is very poetic. For example, 'Humanity Appears Upon the Scene, Hand in Hand with Trouble.' Or 'A Face on Which Time Makes But Little Impression.' Kit and I are concerned with rediscovering the old relationships between people and land in a high-tech urban social structure. Sheep represent rural gentleness and past traditions. But they are framed in computerized video—a very modern electronic context. The question is: Can we survive our future?"

Loss Control

JIM TITTERTON is one of the most versatile and gifted rising young loss-control representatives now employed by the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies. Getting literally behind the scenes well before a Broadway show opens (what Wallace Stevens, in several of his letters to George Bernard Shaw, referred to as "doing an evaluative survey") is Jim Titterton's particular skill. His Broadway loss-control credits include "Les Misérables," "Into the Woods," "Phantom of the Opera," and "M. Butterfly." Jim Titterton doesn't want chorus members high-stepping into the orchestra pit, he hates the thought of sets collapsing on stagehands, he dislikes fires and explosions that aren't part of the planned special effects, it would upset him a lot if an actor was flying around the stage and a winch cable snapped. It is Jim Titterton's job, in other words, to help the Chubb Group avoid coughing up a bundle because something goes wrong with a theatrical production which has nothing to do with the opinions of Frank Rich or John Simon. Prior to taking up a career in loss control, Jim Titterton worked for the New York City Fire Department as an associate inspector, and before that he worked for two other insurance carriers. He holds a bachelor's degree in fire science from John Jay College, speaks circumspectly, and always carries his own flashlight. Small talk is somebody else's department. If you ask him a question and the answer is affirmative, he says crisply (as Sam Beckett has frequently remarked to Billie Whitelaw), "That is correct." Not once in Jim Titterton's working life has he said to an actor, "Break a leg."

The other afternoon, Jim Titterton showed up at the Mark Hellinger Theatre, on West Fifty-first Street, where "Legs Diamond," the potentially boffo new Peter Allen musical—lotsa dancing, lotsa music, lotsa costumes, lotsa money—was on the brink of previews. Already, Jim Titterton had done an initial evaluative survey and a follow-up—he'd checked out the Mark Hellinger's fire sprinklers and house security—and he planned to return to watch a preview performance, during which he would circulate through the house and backstage, relying along the way on his natural talent for unobtrusiveness. Also present for this final pre-preview visit were Robert A. Boyar, an insurance broker who handles a significant chunk of the performing-arts business in town, much of which Chubb underwrites; Robert Boyar's wife and associate, Margery; and the press representative for "Legs Diamond," Shirley Herz.

"Please! Not today!"

"We work on the principle that when trouble happens you should already be covered," said Robert Boyar. "If a production manager is on his way to a date for auditions and is hit by a truck, that should be covered."

"We once had an actress break an ankle during a backer's audition," said Margery Boyar. "*Covered.*"

"Legs Diamond" has two acts and more than thirty scene changes. Scrutinizing the stage from an aisle seat in the orchestra section, Jim Titterton said (echoing without irony Brecht's dramaturgical jottings about "Mother Courage"), "It isn't the most elaborate production, but there is definitely a lot happening here." Suspended fifteen feet above the stage was a six-foot-high electric sign with wood-and-aluminum letters that spelled "LEGS DIAMOND!" Every letter except the two "D"s and the "I" was graced with a sexy-looking fibreglass showgirl mannequin. According to the script, early in each performance two sexy-looking flesh-and-blood showgirls will pose with the "D"s as the sign is lowered from gridwork in the ceiling. Jim Titterton headed for the stage. To get there from the house seats, he had to cross a plywood bridge that spanned the orchestra pit. There was a single handrail, stage left, and a potential workmen's-compensation-claim-generating plunge of about ten feet to the floor below.

Stepping to the footlights, which were covered with a layer of Plexiglas, Jim Titterton made a note to himself to find out how close the actors would come to the edge of the stage. He spied a trapdoor at center stage, and had questions about that, of course. Soon Gary Zabinski, an assistant stage manager, materialized. Jim Titterton mentioned the "LEGS DIAMOND!" sign and was told that its live passengers would board it from the fly floor, thirty feet above the stage. "Sooner or later, I'd like to get up there," Jim Titterton said (coyly borrowing Noël Coward's *mot* about the observation deck of the World Trade Center). Gary Zabinski led him across the stage and up a staircase, past the offices of Jule Styne, the legendary songwriter, and A.J.R. Concessions, the legendary concessions company. Four flights up, the stairs terminated at a doorway leading to a metal-grate landing from which one could descend a narrow metal ladder to the fly floor.

"Just last night, during a technical rehearsal," Gary Zabinski reported, "the young ladies were up and down the ladder in their high heels and they had no problems. They're extremely limber, athletic ladies."

"But I'd be concerned about this decking," Jim Titterton said (segueing into a terse monologue that he had lifted word-for-word from an early draft of Pinter's "The Homecoming"). "If they're in high heels, they could get them caught in the grating here. I'd like to see something more solid here. Plywood might help."

Gary Zabinski promised to take care of it, and then led Jim Titterton down the ladder to the fly floor. They stepped onto a two-by-eight-foot metal apron that provided a walkway to the "LEGS DIAMOND!" sign, which had a Plexiglas base.

"Once the young ladies are out on the Plexiglas, they'll be wearing safety chains," said Gary Zabinski.

Resting his hand on a belt-high piece of railing at the edge of the fly floor, Jim Titterton said, "Is there an idea about a little extra something at midrail—even just a cable, or a single piece of rope? That's quite a drop."

Gary Zabinski looked at the stage floor, thirty feet below, and said, "A good drop."

"Our primary concern, as you know, is everyone's safety," said Jim Titterton (rendering with aplomb the famous line with which Tallulah Bankhead, as Sabina, brought down the house in the 1942 production of Thornton Wilder's "The Skin of Our Teeth").

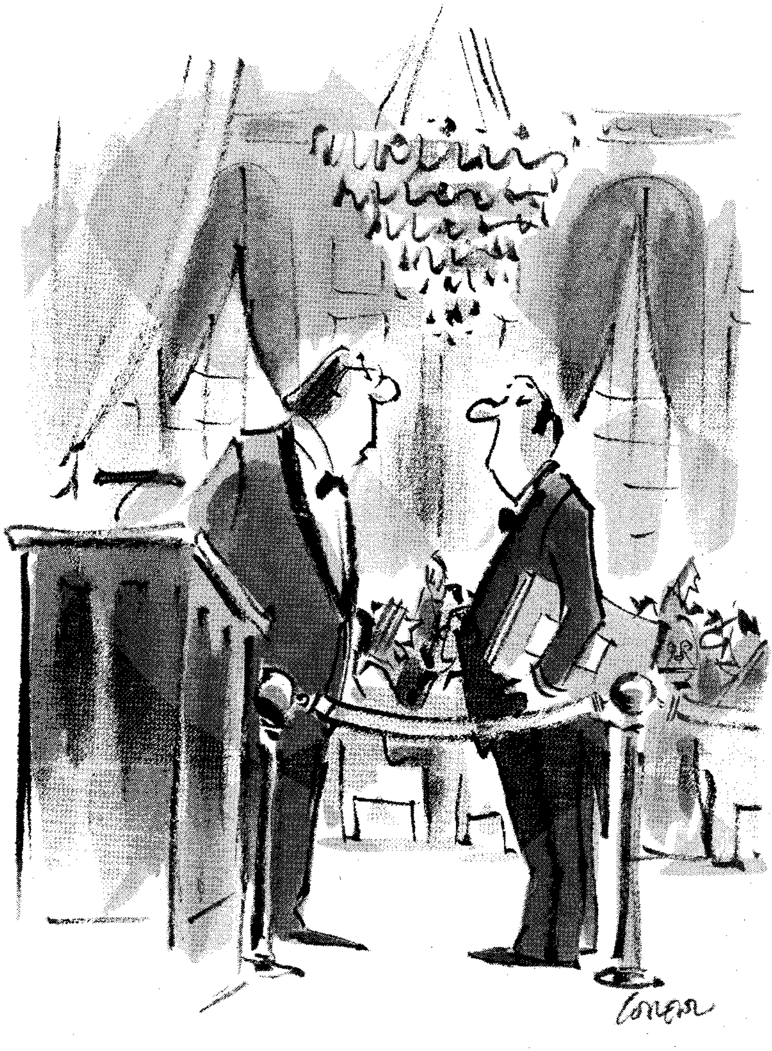
"Of course."

They climbed back up the metal ladder—which, Jim Titterton noticed, was situated below the metal grating in such a way that the showgirls, rushing up it in their high heels to make a costume change, might bump their heads. Jim Titterton said, "Maybe we could get a little padding on the edge of the grating."

Now it was down five flights of stairs—to the basement, a room inhabited mainly by dozens of electrically powered winches, all of which, for loss-control purposes, were caged in chicken wire. A gray wooden box about the size of a dishwasher shipping carton had been installed beneath the trapdoor. Early in Act II, Gary Zabinski explained, Peter Allen would descend through the trapdoor into the box, which would be padded. Before Gary Zabinski could answer any more questions, he heard his name over the paging system and had to excuse himself. Jim Titterton climbed inside the box for a closer examination, and when he tried to stand erect he couldn't. "They should have given him more room in here. He's taller than four feet, isn't he?" he said (repeating Salieri's rhetorical question about Mozart in "Amadeus").

"Oh, Peter Allen *slides* into the box," said Shirley Herz, the press woman. "He's in a coffin and he slides in. It's a very slow slide."

"Just as a preventive measure, I still think we could use a little more foam padding on the joists," said Jim Titterton (whom, if you closed your eyes, you could easily have mistaken for John Barrymore, who ad-libbed the exact same thing when he appeared as Fedor in "The Living Corpse," the memorable adaptation of Tolstoy).


"Should anyone inquire, Harrington, our portions are generous, not liberal."

Atlantic City

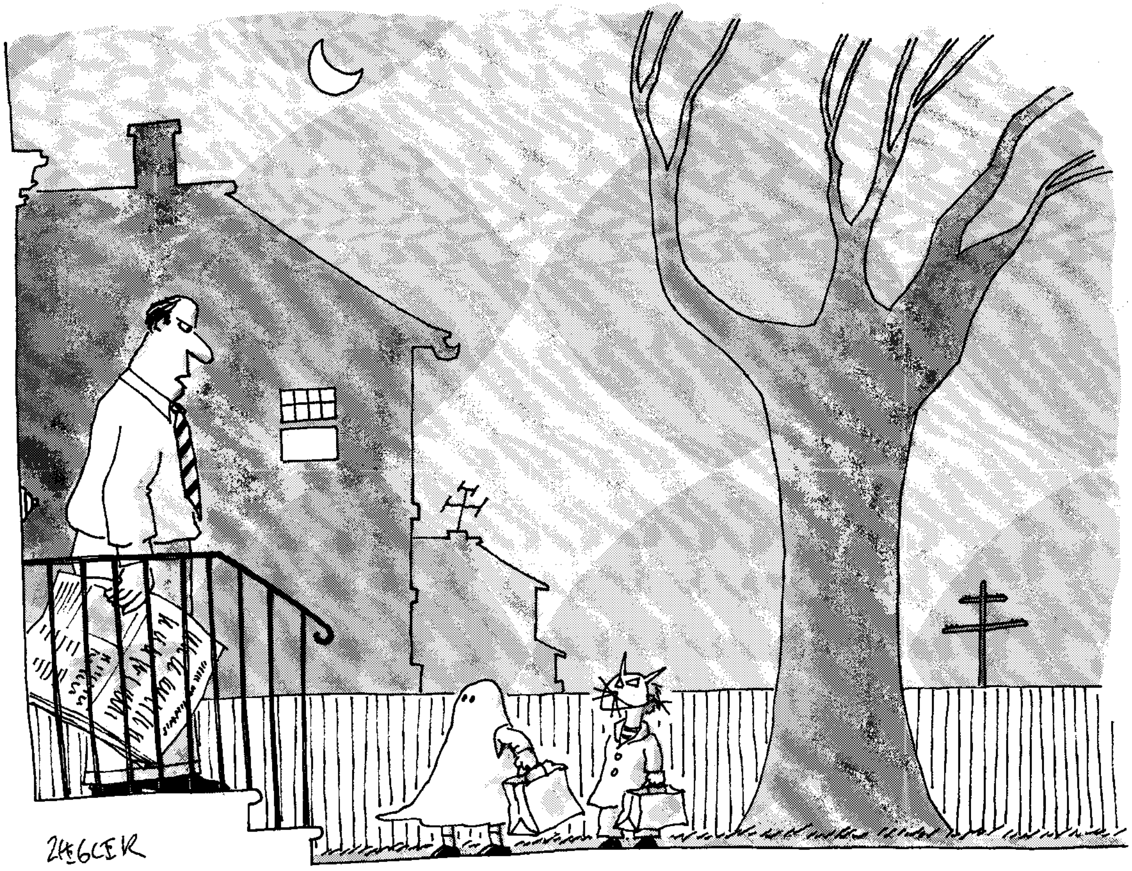
NOTE from a young woman we know:

Recently, my friend Jane was given a free night for two at a hotel in Atlantic City, along with complimentary tickets to a show, and because my birthday was coming up she invited me along. When my other friends called to see what I was doing for my birthday, I said, "Going to Atlantic City." All of them except my friend Cathy responded exactly the same way. They said, "Hmm. Well, everyone should go there at least once." Cathy said, "Too bad."

On Saturday morning, I met Jane at the Port Authority to catch the bus to Atlantic City. The ride took over two hours, and on the way I listened to Guns N' Roses twice on my headphones, we talked about Alan King, whose show we would be seeing, and Jane primed me for the Boardwalk. She described Atlantic City as a place where everything was red. She said that there was a really good mall in Atlantic City, that we would be the youngest people there, and that we wouldn't see one good-looking guy for two days.

Jane and I walk along the Boardwalk to our hotel. The day is hazy and unseasonably hot, and people are carrying their coats over their shoulders like pickaxes. The first thing I notice is the overwhelming smell of popcorn. You can't smell the ocean, or even the grease from all the fast-food joints. All you can smell is buttered popcorn. The entire Boardwalk smells like the inside of a movie house.

In the hotel elevator, loaded down with our stuff, we meet two these-boots-mean-I'm-a-cowboy-type guys, who wink at us and say, "What kind of girls bring books to Atlantic City?" They laugh as if that were the funniest thing they've ever said in their lives. Our books are a *Vogue* and a *Rolling Stone*. Our hotel room is not red but peach. We have a pretty view of the ocean and of something that looks like a Greek ruin.



"I don't suppose you remembered the tax-deduction forms that I asked you to bring last year, did you?"

• •

Next, we go to a hotel casino, with eleven dollars in quarters. People are carrying around big plastic soda cups filled with change, and the sound of the coins clinking makes me think of treasure chests. I put a quarter in a machine and pull the handle. Jane tells me to put in six quarters—that I'll have a better chance of winning that way. I can't grasp this concept; it seems to me the more money I play, the more I'll lose. Jane tries to explain the mathematics of it, but I give her the look I gave so many teachers in high school. Jane gets mad, just the way they did, and everyone turns and looks. "The fun part for me is just pulling the arm," I say. Jane says we should leave.

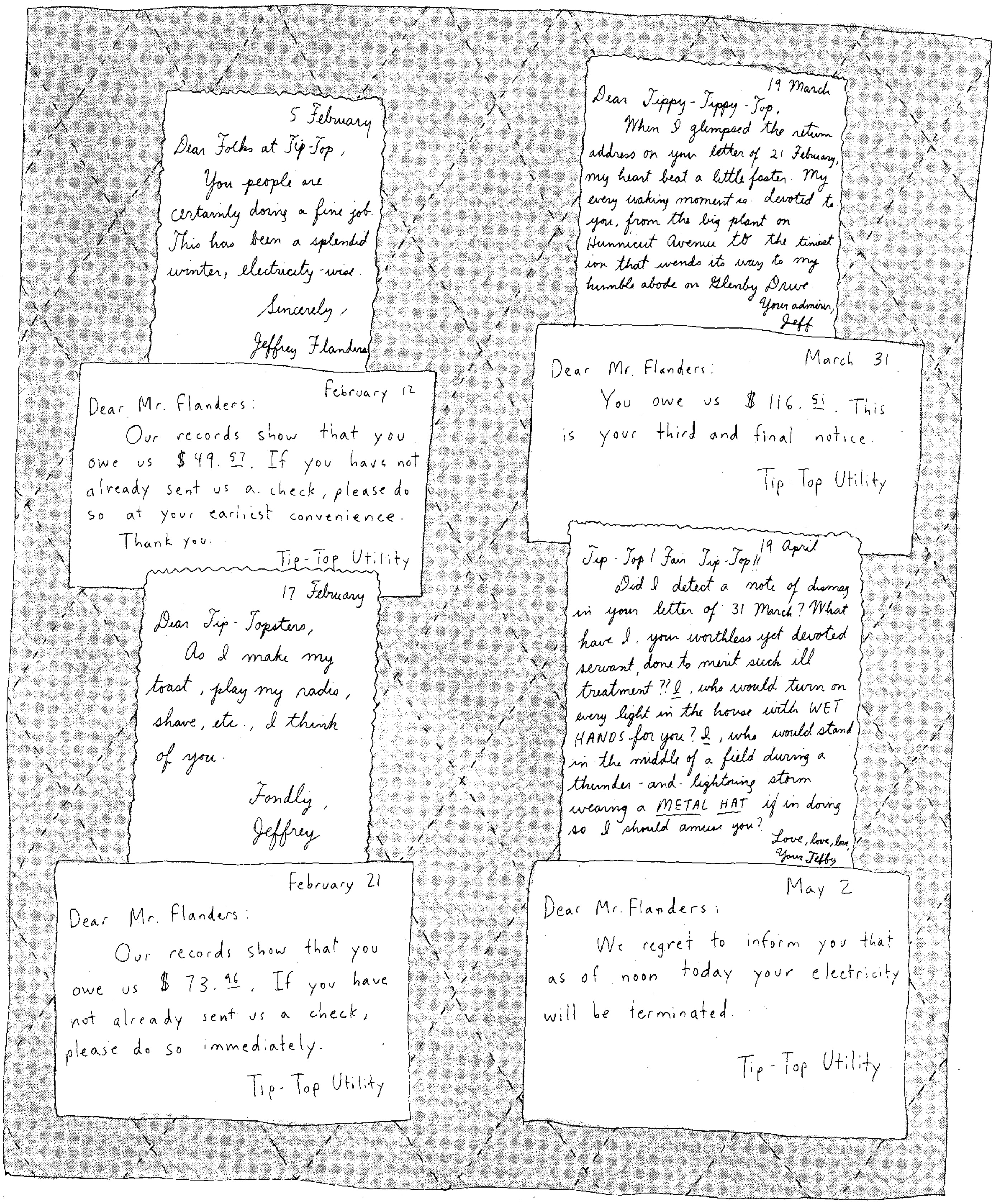
We're carried on a conveyor belt through the Miss America tube, which has pictures of past Miss Americas in it and an oral history piped through invisible speakers. We hear from Bert Parks and Gary Collins, and Mary Ann Mobley and other, even less memorable Miss Americas. Then we go to the mall, and I buy a couple of T-shirts, a thousand-piece heavy-metal puzzle for my nephew, and a Magic 8 Ball. I ask the 8 Ball "Is this like Lake Tahoe?" and when I turn it over to see the answer, "Without a doubt" floats to the window.

Finally, it's Alan King time. We're seated at a small banquet table with three older couples. The women are all wearing big diamonds, and so are the men. The man next to me keeps telling us Rodney Dangerfield jokes as though he had made them up. The man sitting across from me drinks a lot of double Margaritas and his wife drinks a lot of double vodka-and-Perriers. She has the skin of a woman who divides her time between Florida and the Bloomingdale's makeup counters. She doesn't think that the Rodney Dangerfield man is funny when he says, "Gee, you look around forty, you better get your eyes checked." She fiddles with her contacts the rest of the evening. Alan King tells a lot of jokes and anecdotes about his family, and the audience is definitely relating. They're all saying, between sniffles and smiles, "That's just like my family."

After the show, we cruise through one more casino before bed, to see if a casino feels any different that late. I put three quarters in a slot machine and win seven dollars. Next morning, we oversleep, and, in a panic, run eight blocks to catch the bus for New York. We make it just in time, and thank everything in the world we can think of for our good luck. After a while, highway hypnosis sets in. I'm staring out the window at the trees and listening to "Welcome to the Jungle" for the fifth time in a row. Jane tugs on my headphone cord and, smiling like an actor in a bad horror movie, says, "Well, that was fun. Did you have fun? Was it a nice birthday for you?"

"Yeah, Jane, it was great," I answer. "As a matter of fact, I think this is the first birthday where I feel like I've actually aged."

FROM "THE LETTERS OF JEFFREY FLANDERS AND TIP-TOP UTILITY"



5 February

Dear Folks at Tip-Top,

You people are certainly doing a fine job. This has been a splendid winter, electricity-wise.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Flanders

February 12

Dear Mr. Flanders:

Our records show that you owe us $49.57. If you have not already sent us a check, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Tip-Top Utility

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17 February

Dear Tip-Topsters,

As I make my toast, play my radio, shave, etc., I think of you.

Fondly,

Jeffrey

February 21

Dear Mr. Flanders:

Our records show that you owe us $73.96. If you have not already sent us a check, please do so immediately.

Tip-Top Utility

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19 March

Dear Tippy-Tippy-Top,

When I glimpsed the return address on your letter of 21 February, my heart beat a little faster. My every waking moment is devoted to you, from the big plant on Hunnicut Avenue to the tiniest ion that wends its way to my humble abode on Glenby Drive.

Your admirer,

Jeff

March 31

Dear Mr. Flanders:

You owe us $116.51. This is your third and final notice.

Tip-Top Utility

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19 April

Tip-Top! Fair Tip-Top!!

Did I detect a note of dismay in your letter of 31 March? What have I, your worthless yet devoted servant, done to merit such ill treatment?? I, who would turn on every light in the house with WET HANDS for you? I, who would stand in the middle of a field during a thunder-and-lightning storm wearing a METAL HAT if in doing so I should amuse you?

Love, love, love,

Your Jeffy

May 2

Dear Mr. Flanders:

We regret to inform you that as of noon today your electricity will be terminated.

Tip-Top Utility

R. Chast

MAKE IT COUNT

READ these instructions carefully before you begin. If you do not follow correct procedures, your vote will not count.

First, make sure the door to the booth is fully closed and the security bolt is in place. The bolt activates a set of warning lights outside the booth to guarantee privacy. You should see a neon glow through the small pane of safety glass in the upper-right-hand corner of the door.

Once you have secured the booth, take a moment to look around and familiarize yourself with its features. Every effort has been made to insure that your participation in this election will be a pleasant and comfortable experience.

May we make a suggestion? Many voters find that last-minute deliberations are highly stressful. Before starting, you might want to head for the basin at the far end of the counter and freshen up a bit. Towels and washcloths are in the drawers underneath. Also, the voting machines are extremely sensitive to contamination by dirt or small particulates, so it's very important that your hands be thoroughly clean.

Are you in a hurry? Don't be. Decisions made in haste are soon regretted. If you are here on your lunch hour, we have a complete menu available—everything from light garden-fresh salads to hearty full-course main dishes. (All the selections are listed in Appendix A of this voters' pamphlet.) When you are ready to place your order, simply push the "Call" button next to the light switch on the intercom panel.

When you want to start the voting procedure, please be seated at the workstation and face the video screen. Place your hands flat on either side of the keyboard and breathe deeply for ten to fifteen seconds. You should feel relaxed and confident. If you are too warm, do not hesitate to loosen outer garments, or remove them completely. The small fan above the workstation can be activated and adjusted by using the remote-control pedals located under the desk.

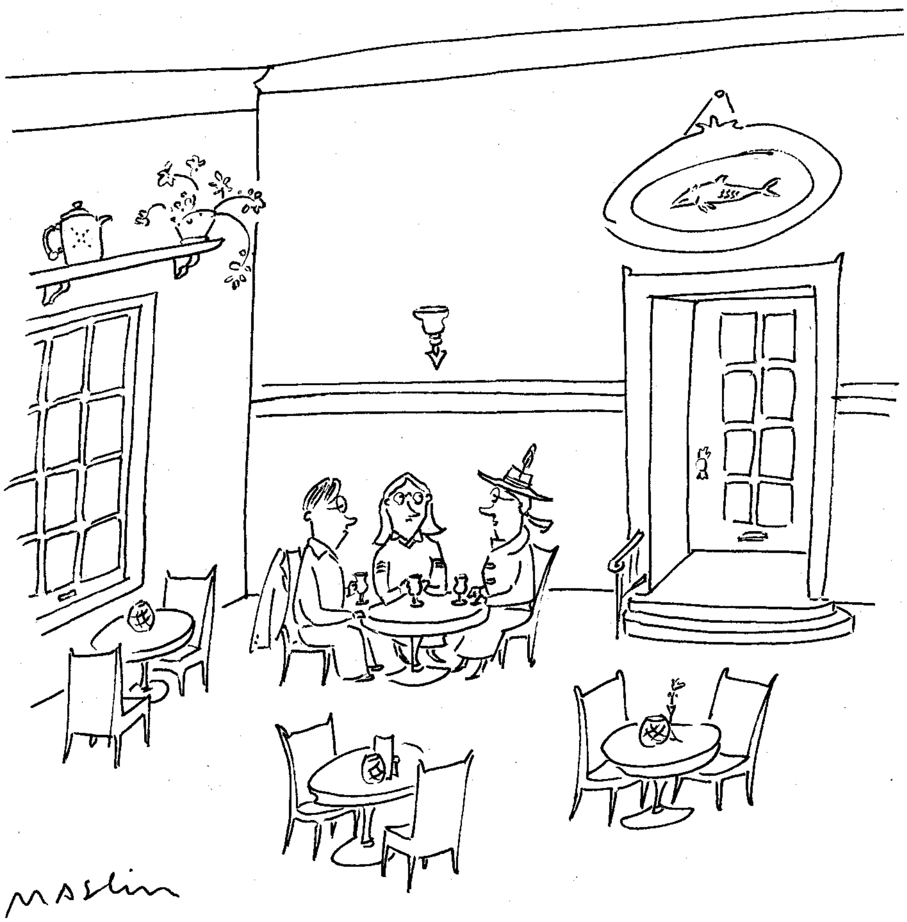
This system uses the new LANDSLIDE software program, which was developed specifically for electoral purposes. It is virtually foolproof. However, if you should make an error or become confused after you have begun voting, simply pick up the red telephone beside the terminal and dial the toll-free number listed on the mouthpiece. A technician will assist you as soon as one is available. While you are waiting, a variety of audio recordings are available for your listening pleasure on twelve separate channels. A guidebook containing the complete listing for each channel is enclosed in the large manila envelope taped to the back of your chair, along with dialling instructions. We have made every effort to bring these recordings into compliance with the latest statutes governing bilingual voting materials. However, owing to technical limitations, Lloyd Bridges' readings from the abridged "Moby Dick" cannot be provided in Flemish or Indonesian.

If you feel you need more time to deliberate the issues and to consider the candidates involved in this election, pull down the small viewing screen mounted above the washbasin. This will activate a short instructional film, "Your Mark in History," narrated by Fess Parker, which demonstrates the importance of individual voters in American politics. Headphones will drop from an overhead rack. These are disposable, and should be placed in the wastebasket at the conclusion of the film, or you may keep them as a souvenir of your visit.

When you have finished voting, be sure to ask the precinct captain for a rating card and fill it out before leaving. We cannot improve service if we don't hear from you. By filling out the card, you also automatically become eligible to win our Election Sweepstakes. Watch on Inauguration Day—you may hear your name announced on national TV by the new Chief Executive!

Now the rest is up to you. Medical technicians and lifesaving equipment are standing by in case of emergency.

If you are ready to begin, press the "Start" button on the keyboard in front of the video screen. And thank you for not smoking. —JEFFREY SHAFFER



"Are you planning a long marriage following the ceremony?"

FIRE DREAMS

EVERYBODY lives two ways. The first is simple, the second less so.

It's Sunday afternoon. The firemen are washing the fire trucks, sending great streams of water into the air and filling the gutters with soapsuds. It reminds me of elephants taking baths. Other firemen are sweeping out the firehouse, or trimming weeds with a snarling electric wand. Sunday afternoon is when they do this sort of thing. The fire station is at the entrance to the subdivision, so people driving to and from Sunday errands can gaze approvingly at the firemen. *Volunteers*, people think, impressed.

I live next door to the firehouse, which is an aluminum-sided building with a flagpole. I live in a disreputable corner of an exemplary neighborhood. You reach our subdivision by driving a few miles down the highway, past a shopping center and a couple of superannuated farmhouses. It is nearly always Sunday afternoon here. It is the sort of neighborhood that real-estate agents enjoy touring with clients, pointing out its virtues from their pneumatic front seats. The lawns are groomed with military precision, and the houses sit on them like closed mouths. If a garage door opens, it reveals the organizational splendor of hardware-store advertisements: tools on pegboards, lawn chairs on hooks, garden-hose caddies, sparkling concrete. There is always a ball of some sort, either aloft or smacking on a sidewalk. There is a child on a bicycle and a dog barking at nothing.

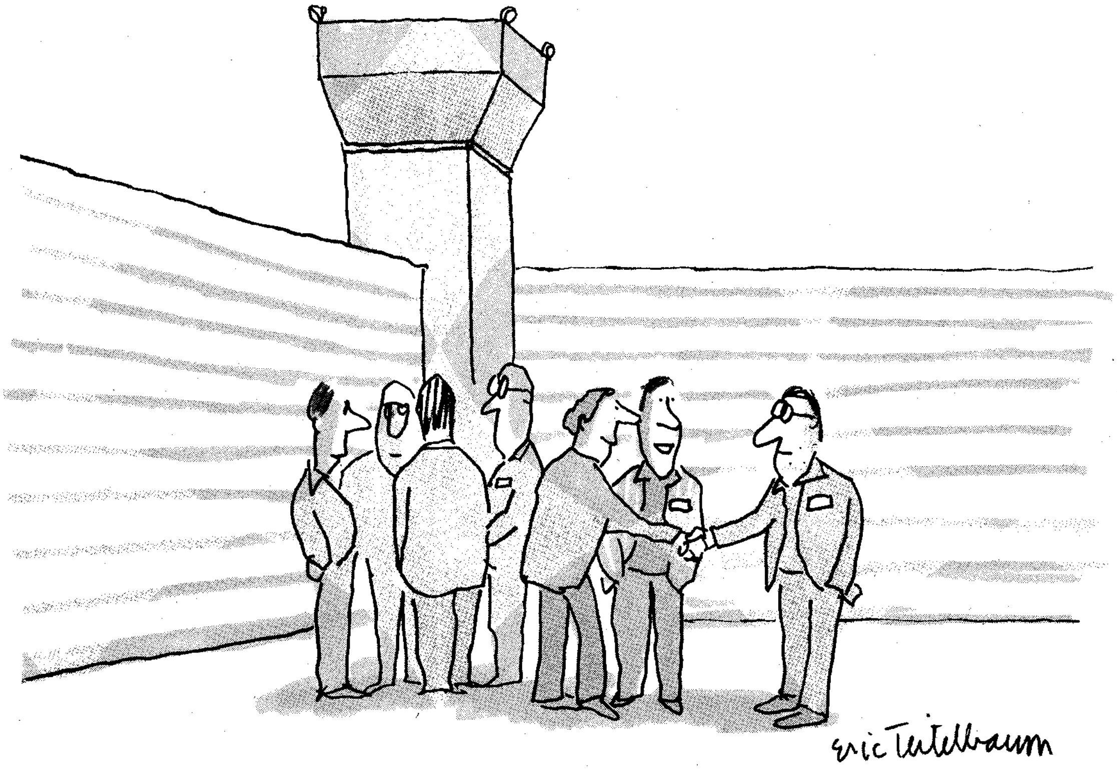
At night no one lives here. That's what you'd think. The lights are out by ten, except for the ornamental lampposts in one or another front yard, throwing arcs of light on the white, white gravel of flower beds, on the acid-green grass. In a darkened room, a blue aquarium sends up bubbles, and fish circle their plastic coral, castles, mermaids. Everyone is asleep, or at least invisible. You try to imagine sex, anger, insomnia, grief. But everything is too well hidden, muffled behind layers of glass and draperies and silence. The night is unacknowledged.

But some nights the siren sounds. Men rise up from their beds, not yet awake, still dreaming of fires. Their hearts are large with excitement and hurry. Dark figures lope across the grass, calling to each other. The fire trucks go screaming out onto the highway, most often to some country district, returning a couple of hours later to fill the night with unnatural light and noise. This is when I hear them. I can sleep through the siren, but the laughter of the men wakes me, and I go to the window to watch. The men take their time folding the hoses and maneuvering the trucks back into place. The night is over but they linger, reluctant to let the excitement go. When they do return home the more anxious of the wives will be waiting up for them, offering coffee, asking, Was it a bad one? Was anyone hurt?

The husbands shake their heads. No big deal, they say, yawning. It was a trash fire. Or a field fire. More yawning. Jeez, I'm beat. And they go off to bed for a last hour or two of sleep. The wives are left feeling they've been cheated.

I'm imagining that last part. I live alone, a suspect woman in a neighborhood of families. How would I know what the wives and husbands say?

There is always something happening at the firehouse. The firemen keep busy with raffles, yard sales, fundraisers of all sorts. They have an annual pancake breakfast (spring), and a chili supper (fall). At these events, the firemen's wives don aprons and serve up food on plastic trays. I've eaten it, trying to be a good neighbor. On pancake day or chili day, the cars start arriving early. All day long, the hungry and sociable disembark. Inside, people sit at long tables drinking milk from cartons or iced tea from sweating plastic glasses. It's a friendly group. Everybody knows everybody else. The firemen's wives bustle importantly in the kitchen. They are stern, competent women, managing their children with efficient threats, wrinkling their noses over ciga-



"Paul Harrison, Colorado v. Harrison, meet Joe McFarland, Illinois v. McFarland."

rettes, scrubbing and disinfecting energetically.

I sit at one of the tables ruminating over my milk, chewing thoroughly. Even while eating I maintain a pleasant, neutral expression—someone willing, though not anxious, to make friends. But no one talks to me. My solitude embarrasses them, and finally me. The pancakes accumulate in my stomach like a stack of mattresses; the chili solidifies. Eating this food is a ritual for me, the way eating the heart of bear was for Indians. If I eat my neighbors' food, will my house grow as sleek and prosperous as theirs?

My house is, I'm sure, a grief to them. It is a survivor of predevelopment times, a shabby bungalow that must have been unimpressive even when new. It is the sort of house the real-estate agents refer to darkly as "rental property." The gutters sag. The paint blisters. The flowers in my odd garden—daisies, golden yarrow, orange cosmos—have a weedy, overgrown look to them. I live somewhere between halfhearted effort and eyesore. My plumbing sweats. My driveway is bald in patches. My lawn distresses everyone from April through September.

The lawn is how I met Clark. To explain: I have too much lawn, a third acre of dispirited grass punctuated by thistle and dandelion. I wish it would turn brown and stunted. Either that or come up in wildflowers, a meadow. Anyway, I was trying to mow my lawn. I usually try, and get just so far before I give up and hire someone else to finish it. This time, I couldn't get the mower started. Each time I yanked at the thing, it barked and stopped short of turning over. Each time, I swore and bruised myself against it. I couldn't win and I couldn't hurt it. The muscle in my shoulder felt torn. Sweat was growing on me like fur. I considered going berserk, then straightened my back and called, "Hey, could you help me a minute?"

That was Clark. He was next door at the fire station, dragging boxes out to the trash. I didn't know him then. He's blond, and all summer long he looks boiled from the sun. A spare, rangy man who walks with a hitch, as if his shoulders were out of line. You don't think there's any size at all to him until you stand up next to him. I don't know what I looked like that day. Pissed off, and wearing something I could cut the grass in.

Clark approached, looking startled. Or maybe it was just his blond eyebrows. "I can't get this mower started," I announced. I wanted to say the goddam, son-of-a-bitch mower. I wanted to sound tough. I was embarrassed about asking for help.

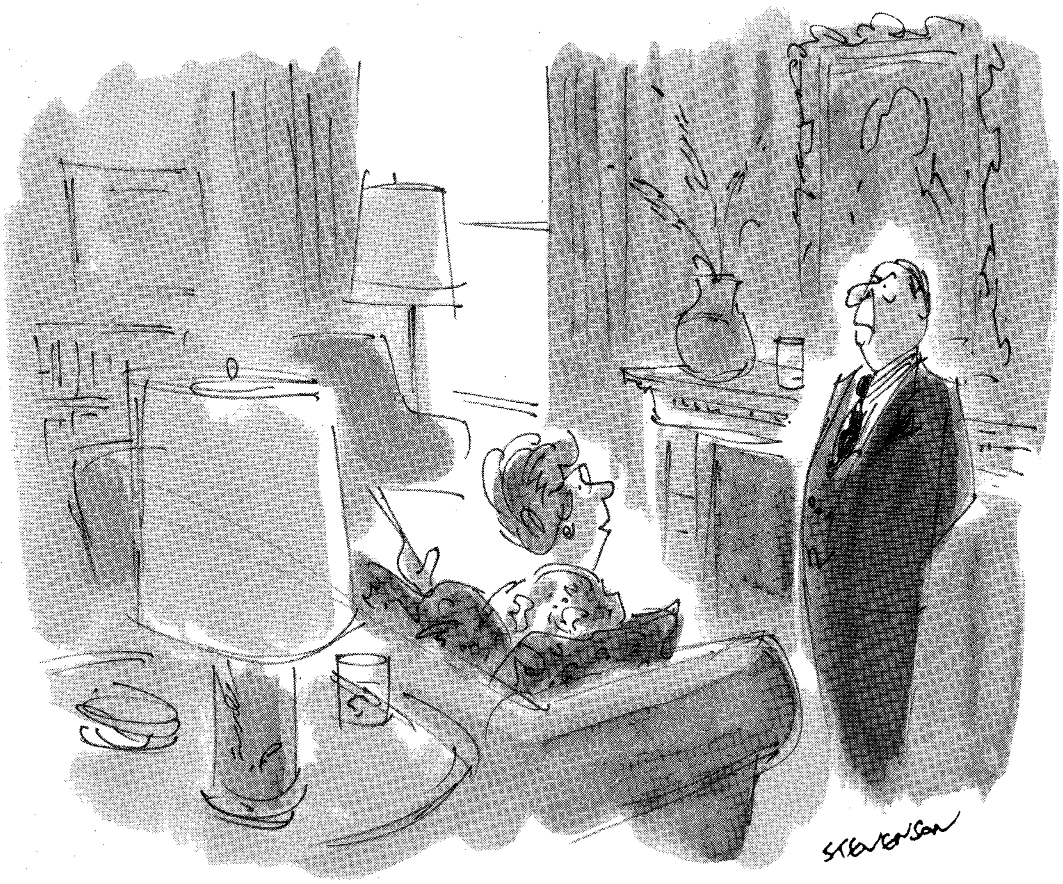
Clark didn't say anything. He never says much of anything. He stooped over the mower, gave it an experimental tug. I felt better when it wouldn't start for him either. Another yank. This time he was getting his back into it. The mower kicked and coughed. Greasy smoke erupted from it in a steady stream, turning the grass blue-black. It was genuinely alarming, as if I really would need a fireman in a minute. Clark shut the mower off. We watched it bubble blackly to a halt. "You put oil in it lately?" he asked.

His voice was light, flat, perfectly Midwestern. If he was laughing at me, I couldn't tell. I figured out later that he wasn't. "Too much, huh?" I said, regarding the oil pooling on the mower's surface. I felt as mortified as if shit had poured out of the thing.

Clark wiped his hands on a nearby patch of weeds. "You'll have to drain all that out," he advised me. "Drain it out and start over. How much oil you put in there, anyway?"

"Oh, I really don't know." I shrugged. I'd put in most of a quart, but I was damned if I was going to admit it. "Thanks for your help."

He said it was no problem. We in-



"Since, as you say, Geoffrey, you're only passing this way once, it seems a shame to be such a pompous ass."

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troduced ourselves. He lived just down the street, he said, pointing. I knew which house was his. When Clark cuts his grass, he uses a riding mower. Afterward his lawn has a pattern in it, perfect diagonal stripes. The diagonals knocked me out. They indicated either compulsiveness or artistic nonconformity, I couldn't decide which.

"Night before last, I heard the sirens," I said. "Was it a big fire?"

"Night before— Oh. Nah. Not really."

"Where was it?" I persisted. I was tired of not knowing things. And I wanted to keep him talking.

"County Line Road. This house trailer. Nobody home. We think it was electrical."

"Electrical," I repeated. I didn't like to hear things like that. As if the walls of all houses were threaded with mutinous wires, twining like ivy, conspiring against you.

"I hate a trailer fire," said Clark. "Those things burn like cereal boxes. People shouldn't live in them."

The line of sunburn under his eyes darkened. Talking about fires seemed to energize him. He brushed the sweat from his forehead with the back of his hand. He looked strong. I imagined him climbing tall ladders into smoke, swaying with the high-pressure stream of water. "Where should they live, then?"

"Pardon?"

"Some people can't live anywhere else. That's what trailers are for."

Clark looked at me, visibly thinking. You could see different thoughts tugging him this way and that. His nose twitched. His eyebrows converged. He was trying to figure me out, why I lived the way I did, alone and out of place. He looked guilty, embarrassed. "I guess so," he said. Then, "You should get a dog."

"Pardon?"

"A dog. Nobody bothers you when you have a dog."

"But nobody bothers me now," I said.

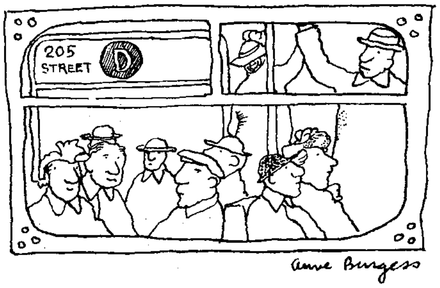
Clark shrugged. "You never know about people."

"Maybe not," I said. He was alarming me. I wondered what it meant when someone looked at you imagining how easily you could be hurt.

"Don't worry," he said. "We keep an eye on you from the firehouse. We watch out for things. Remember to drain out that oil." He ducked his head and smiled a quick, jerky smile.

It was more than a week before I got the grass cut.

I TAKE a walk through my neighborhood. Who here would do me harm? It's twilight. The lawns are velvet, and kindly yellow light spills from the windows. On the next block are the Holidays. That's what I call them, though it's not the name on their mailbox. As regularly as a grade school, their house displays the trappings of the season. Festoons of paper hearts a month before Valentine's Day. Then eggs and bunnies, then patriotic bunting, then jack-o'-lanterns and witches. Turkeys in November, Christmas an explosion of lights and plastic Santas. Every night, the premises are lit up like a prison yard.



The Holidays are bizarre, but they're not the sort of people Clark warned me about. Their eccentricities are too well displayed to be dangerous. They have no secrets. They are nothing to fear. They are a skin turned inside out.

At Clark's house there is a gap in the drapes and the color TV is alight. From the sidewalk it looks like a luminous marble, or like the earth seen from space. Someone's head is visible, resting on a chair. From the back I can't tell if it's Clark or Mrs. Clark or their son. Mrs. Clark is a tall woman with amorphous hair. I see her only from a distance, tending to garbage cans or lawn sprinklers. I imagine what she and Clark say to each other: *The roses need fertilizing. Did you fix the window? The washer? One gallon latex semigloss white. Kleenex.*

TENNYSON

Like many of us he was rather disgusting,
With his deliberate dirtiness, his myopia, his smell,
His undying enmity for unfavorable reviewers,
His stinginess, his coy greed for titles, money, and gowns,
His contempt for Cockneys and Americans—
Sallow, greasy, handsome, the ur-Victorian.
Stupid, as Auden called him.

And yet one of the great songsters of the English word,
Though we still say, a century beyond,
With qualifications.
                                        And modern!
A family riddled with drugs, alcohol, and insanity,
His major themes all givens or hand-me-downs,
The omnium-gatherum of "In Memoriam"
For beloved Arthur, the high-school "Idylls,"
The triumph of Faulknerian "Maud"
(Though only Browning could call it great);

Yanking his son out of Cambridge to be his biographer,
The slavey wife he truly cherished,
His fear of Darwin, his desperation for everlastingness.

Beautiful tedious Alfred, nicotine drooling from his
        meerschaum pipe,
Which he invited guests to suck,
Long-lived, the very image of English Poet,
Whose songs still break out tears in the generations,
Whose prosody for practitioners still astounds,
Who crafted his life and letters like a watch.

—KARL SHAPIRO

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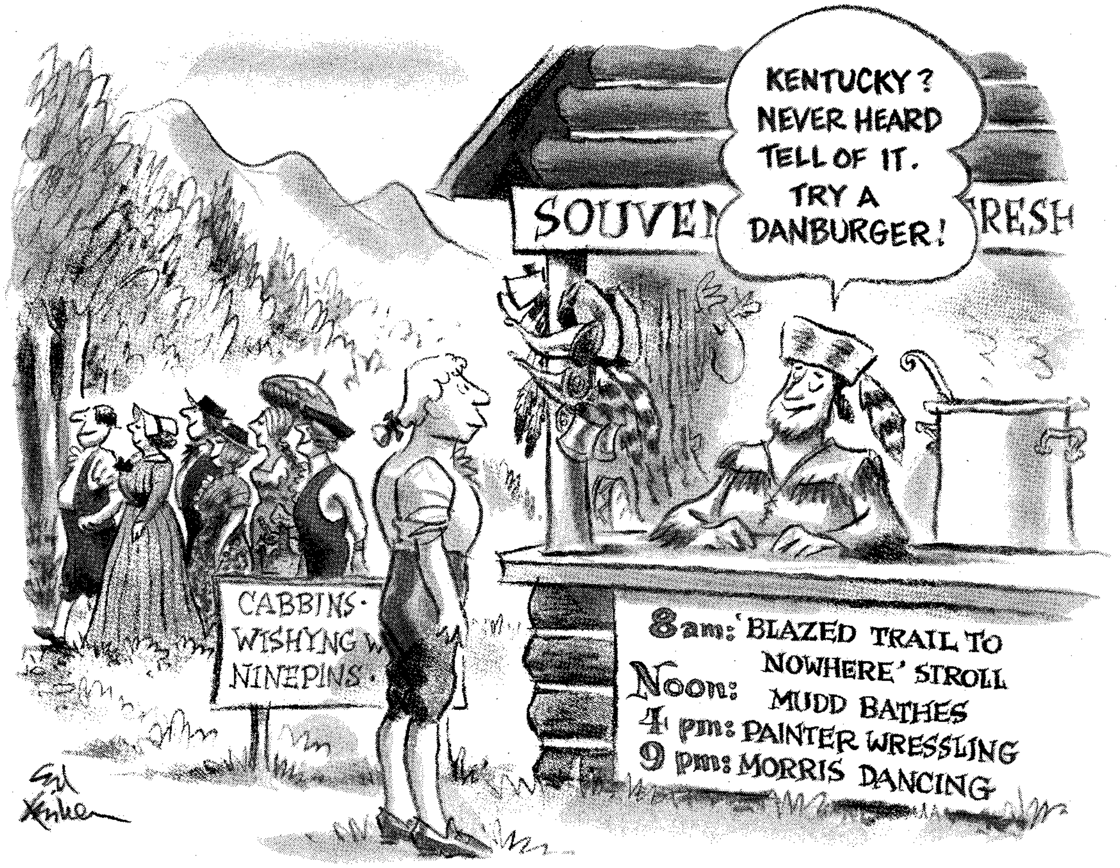
Their boy is about ten. Blond, like Clark. I've never talked to him, though I've seen him often. He speeds down the sidewalk on his bicycle, coming up behind so fast and so silently all you feel is the sting of the air blowing past you, a whirring like an insect. Sometimes the boy looks back. To see if he's frightened you? I don't know his name. I see him with other such boys, calling out to each other from their bicycles, shouting taunts. The boys are restless, shrill, bored. They pedal the bicycles furiously, as if this might make them grow up faster. They argue over baseball games and handfuls of coins. They set off forbidden firecrackers. If there were large enough trees here, they would build tree houses. Instead, they erect backyard tents, which they inhabit all summer long, reading comic books with flashlights, filling their mouths with soda, Oreos, bubble gum in the shape of robots. Restless, shrill, by turns languid and hyperkinetic, they seem to me both alarming and hopeful. They are unformed; they are not yet respectable.

DAN'L BOONE, INSTEAD OF OPENING UP THE WEST, PIONEERS THE LEISURE INDUSTRY


KENTUCKY? NEVER HEARD TELL OF IT. TRY A DANBURGER!
SOUVE
RESH
CABBINS · WISHYNG W · NINEPINS ·
8am: 'BLAZED TRAIL TO NOWHERE' STROLL
Noon: MUDD BATHES
4 pm: PAINTER WRESSLING
9 pm: MORRIS DANCING

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"WHAT is it you like about fighting fires?" I ask Clark one afternoon.

He shrugs. He either doesn't want to answer or wants me to pull it out of him.

I anticipate this; I'm ready to be patient. "I mean, I'd be scared."

"Nah."

"Come on. Aren't you afraid of what could happen?"

"A chemical fire. You worry about those, sure," says Clark.

We're standing on my front porch. I'd ask him to sit down, but that would startle him, make him take flight. Standing, we can talk all day.

"You go into a warehouse, farm shed, place like that. You don't know what all's in there. Things start popping, they could be caustics, explosives, anything. Stuff's like nerve gas. Go in without your air, you're cooked."

"I never thought of that," I say. "That would be bad, all right." Then, craftily, "The lumberyard. You must have liked that one."

Clark grins his sideways grin. It's as if one side of his mouth is trying to hide the other. "It was something."

People drove to the lumberyard fire as if it were a parade. There was never a question of putting the fire out. It burned hot and clean, a rolling orange flame in the shape of a ragged paintbrush. People crowded against the barricades, wanting to get close enough for it to feel mildly dangerous. Six fire companies were there, talking into radios, marching around the perimeter in their heavy rubber boots and coats. (Are they really rubber? I'll have to ask Clark.) When the roof went, it didn't happen all at once, the way I thought it would. It seemed to take a long time, and it made a noise like a waterfall. Who would have thought fire could sound like water? We watched the roof sink in on itself, making a hole in the great flame we'd almost come to believe was solid. New flames licked up from it, new sparks somersaulted through the air. The firemen watched, too, no longer pretending to do anything. We were all in love with it. We didn't want it to go out. I had a vision of us feeding the flames, of people scurrying to bring it fuel, tossing microwaves, minibikes, Mr. Coffees, La-Z-Boys into the fire. The heap of things grows. The fire consumes golf clubs and toaster ovens. And everyone is peaceful and content, watching.

Recollecting myself, I say to Clark, "No one got hurt, either. That's important."

Clark nods, looking pious. "That's the real satisfaction of this job."

I say, "What would you do if there weren't any fires?"

He's looking at me, and everything

about him is completely still except his eyes. His eyes are fixed on my face. They are moving him closer without his taking a step. The late-afternoon shadows pass over us like breath. He says, "Once in a while I . . ."

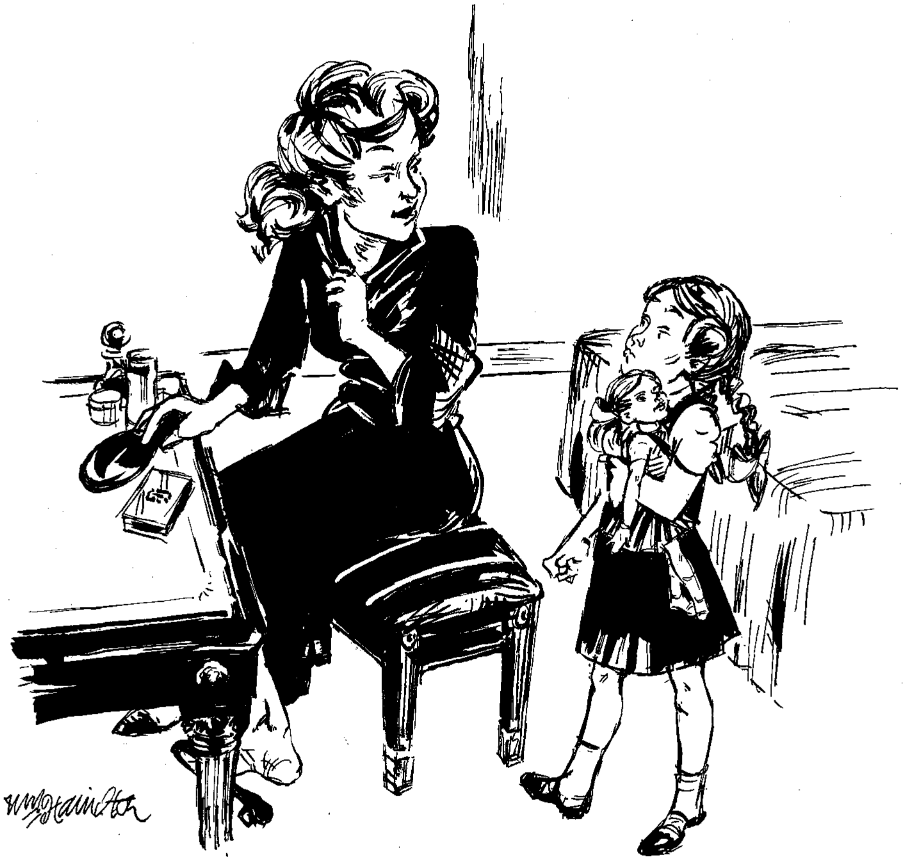
At the same moment we both hear it, that small insect whine of gears. Clark's son coasts by on the sidewalk slowly, balancing on his bicycle pedals in a sort of parade rest. One hand hoists something to his mouth, something purple on a stick. His face, turned toward us, staring, is elongated by the labor of sucking. He resembles a little blond horse. The pedals click; he's gone.

"Getting late," says Clark. "Been nice talking to you."

I sit on the porch after sunset. It's suppertime, TV time. If you were to invade the grid of privacy fences that mark the back yards, those fences within fences, a stockade of houses defended against themselves, you'd see families bathed in the light of the cathode ray. An enormous car passes by. It's some mutant species of Lincoln, bronze and caramel, metal made to resemble wood, and so long it seems to bend around corners. The tires are white, the glass is tinted the color of tobacco. There are little chrome crests, crossed swords, miniature banners, scrolls. The car has a calculated heraldic look, as if it was inspired by an old Robin Hood movie. It rolls majestically down the street and out of sight.

THINGS begin to go wrong—little things at first. A bicycle disappears from a back porch. A garbage can is rolled into the street. A mailbox is knocked off its moorings. People are puzzled, then outraged. Neighbors regard each other warily over the fences. Small mischief, but it does a disproportionate amount of damage. The polite theory is that outsiders, deprived and envious youths from less fortunate districts, have invaded us, but in reality everyone suspects everyone else's children.

Then the Holidays are victimized. Someone heaves a rock through the picture window where they have displayed, in the sweat of August, a Halloween witch. The next day a repair van pulls up in their driveway along with a sombre car, most probably the insurance agent's. When the window is replaced it's left vacant, as if in mourning. Who would do something so mean-spirited? So petty? So audacious?



"Good Lord, Tracy. When Daddy says we're dead broke, he doesn't mean we're poor."

"I would," I say to Clark. "If I thought I could get away with it."

We're eating peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches in bed. Peanut butter and jelly is all we could find in the kitchen. The television is on and we're hitting the remote switch: talk shows, baseball, Japanese science fiction. I like Clark better with his clothes off. The pattern of white and sunburn reminds me of the pattern in his lawn.

"I hope the siren doesn't start," I say. "I hope you don't have to jump up and go fight a fire."

"I don't care. Everything can burn down."

"You don't mean that."

He rolls onto me, fast, so his weight pushes the breath out of me. On the television, a cardboard Japanese city sways and totters. The tiny screams are blotted out by Clark's warm mouth on my ear. He breathes peanut butter. "Don't be so sure," he whispers.

EVENING. I am walking my dog. The dog is an elderly spaniel with jowls, and pouchy fat dangling from him like an udder. The dog's name is Snoopy. "Good dog," I say to him, making conversation. "Good Snoopy." He looks up at me with sorrowing, red-rimmed eyes. He reminds me too much of my shabby furniture and mismatched plates. Still, I enjoy walking him. A dog gives you an excuse for a walk. It's a kind of camouflage, as well as protection. With a dog, no one suspects you of nosiness or idling. You become less visible. Clark was right. No one will bother me.

We're rounding the corner toward home when I hear the sirens. The trucks are just pulling out, swaying as they make the turn. The men holding on behind look precarious and small. The sirens recede in the distance, like sound falling down a well.

By the time we reach my yard, the fire trucks are back. No noise this time, no flourishes. The men drop off the truck and walk away quickly, as if embarrassed. I look for Clark but don't see him. "What happened?" I call to one man, a man with a blue T-shirt and a potbelly. Not all the firemen are in good shape, like Clark.

The man gives me a look. "False alarm," he says curtly, and points his stomach down the block toward home.

IT rains for a week and no one can cut the grass. When I let the dog out he squats miserably at the edge of the yard. He has a constant smell of old rug. My neighbors worry about their sump pumps and garage roofs. At night we sleep in a world of water, the sound of it soaking into our dreams. Clark's sunburn is fading. I tease him about it, tell him I'm going to get a sunlamp and adhesive tape and burn my initials all over his body like tattoos. But he's gloomy.

"I'm not happy," he says. "I'm tired of being a fireman."

I look at him, startled. "Why?"

"I don't know. There aren't any good fires now. It's just not the same."

"Maybe people don't appreciate you? They take you for granted?"

"It used to be enough," Clark says mournfully, "keeping things clean, staying alert. Now, who cares?"

"I've done this to you," I tell him.

He lets his hand graze my breast, tries to make a joke. "I didn't know how much I was getting into."

"You were happy before you met me."

"But I didn't know I was happy. What good did it do me?"

I don't have an answer for that and he mopes on home, his shoes squishing with rain.

I think the whole neighborhood has been infected with discontent. A mailbox sags on a broken hinge. Hedges grow leggy. A door slams, cutting off the sound of an argument. There's nothing good on TV. When the rain pauses from time to time, low clouds remain, pressing the smell of swamp into everything.

One night, just after I turn my lights out, I hear something beneath the bedroom window. Whispers, someone giggling. The dog snores undisturbed at the foot of the bed. I creep to the window. "Chicken," I hear a voice say distinctly. A boy's voice. "*You* do it, then," says another. "Go ahead. It was your idea, big shot."

Just then the dog awakes and, snuffling with confusion, hurls himself at the window, baying. They are so young their voices are still girls' voices when they scream. They bolt away across the wet grass too fast for me to see their faces.

Clark's son's name is Cliff. I ask Clark about him and he says, "Funny kid. Won't talk anymore. Ask him a question, he looks out the window. Name, rank, and serial number, that's all you get out of him these days." I tell Clark it's just the age he is, a phase.

I sneak up behind Cliff when he's on his bicycle. I have to hide in the shrubbery for hours, as if it were a duck-blind. I wait for the whir and click of his gears, then spring out, wrestling his handlebars to a stop. "Gotcha."

He topples off his bicycle but lands on his feet. Even now, he only looks me in the eye for a moment, then his face closes up again. Tough kid. "Gimme my bike," he says.

"What were you doing under my window?"

"I didn't do nothing," he says, addressing the air to the left of my head.

"Bullshit." The great thing about ten-year-olds is that you don't have to watch your language. "I caught you red-handed."

"You can't prove nothing."

"I don't have to. Look at you. You have one of those naturally guilty faces. You ought to do something about it. Otherwise you're going to spend your life in police lineups."

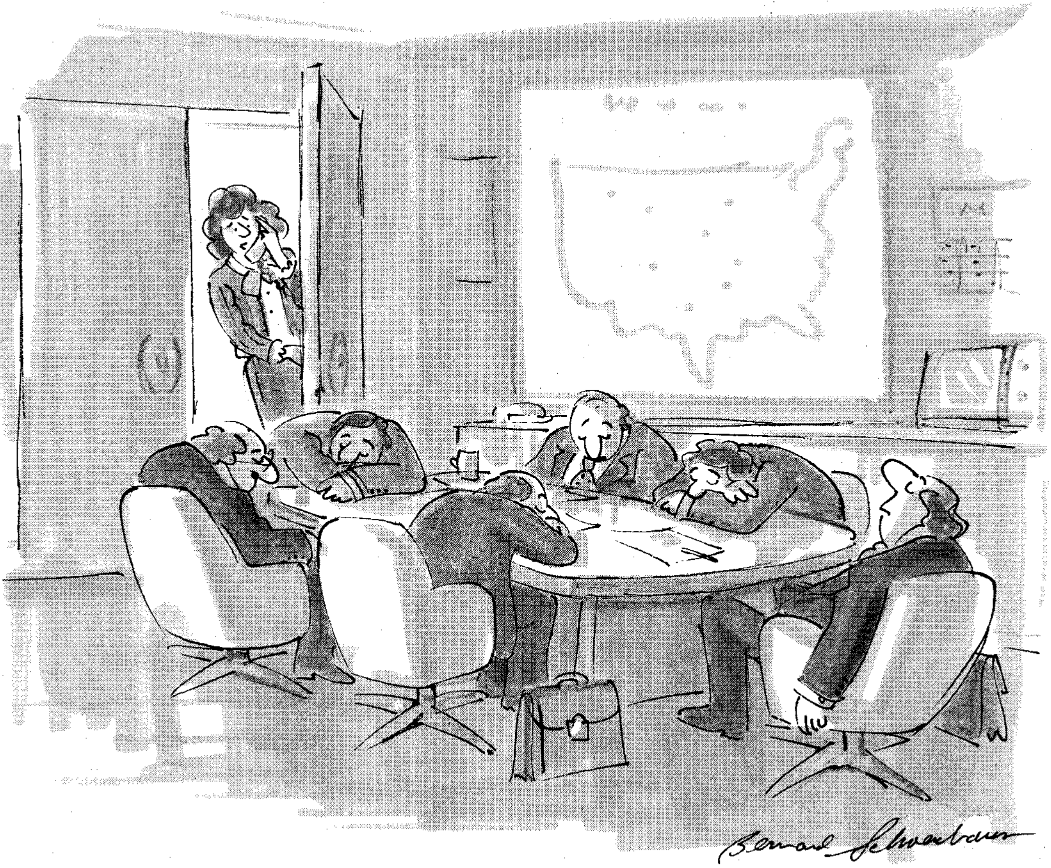
He takes this as a compliment. Pleasure fleets across his face, then he flattens it again, looking sulky.

"Nice talking to you, Cliff."

"Call me Spike," he says, coasting down the sidewalk.

THE rain stops, but in its place is a glaring, no-color sky. Everything feels sticky, everyone is stupefied with heat. "Dog days," I tell Snoopy. He's wrapped himself around the toilet and he lies there, panting shallowly.

I'm in the bathtub. I've been there all morning. I'm trying to shrivel myself up entirely. Skin is the enemy in this weather. Then I hear the peculiar moan and wrench of the plumbing, which means next door the firemen are



"No decision. They're still sleeping on it."

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opening a hydrant. An unmistakable sound, invasive and guttural. As I lie in the bathtub, it feels like someone is goosing me. I dress hurriedly and go to the door.

It's a strange sight. The firemen are lined up in military formation, at attention. In spite of the heat, they are wearing full regalia: hats, boots, gloves, long shaggy coats. Each fireman clutches a bouquet of wilting back-yard flowers: petunias, snapdragons, zinnias. The fire chief is reading from a small book, and when he closes it the men, on cue, drop the flowers into the stream of water making its way along the curb. They stand for a moment with bowed heads, then they troop inside. It looks curiously like a funeral, though for no one in particular.

IT'S evening, and not one breath cooler. Clark has heat rash on his stomach. He scratches it ferociously, leaving clawed red crescents.

"I wish you'd stop that."

He gives me an ugly look. "I thought that was your whole philosophy. If you have an itch, scratch it, and damn the consequences."

"Guilt-tripping. I should have known you'd get to that."

His face turns the color of his inflamed skin, and red seeps into his eyes. He draws in his breath. "All right," he says. "I'll take my share of the responsibility."

"I hate that word," I say. My turn to sound bitter. I know it's all over and I've lost something.

"Things were better before," he says. "Everyone knew who they were and how to behave. We didn't have secrets. Everything was out in the open."

"You'd better get on home," I tell him, wanting him gone now.

He bounds through the room, snatching up his clothes. He's that grateful to be leaving. At the door he hesitates, seems as if he's about to shake my hand. Kisses me instead. "I'm sorry," he says. "I'm not the man you thought I was."

"Remember to put something on that rash," I tell him.

IT'S Sunday afternoon. We all have our jobs to do. The firemen are painting the trim on the firehouse. They have erected scaffolding, a kind of exoskeleton, around the building. They haul buckets up and down, or they take turns standing back to admire their work. Clark is perched on the topmost rung of the scaffold, showing off. He is painting the very highest board. It looks as if he were painting the sky. The muscles in his reaching arm form one long arc. Reaching, reaching . . . the scaffolding begins to shake and clank, threatening disaster. Finally he steadies himself and climbs down, grinning, as though he knew all along he wouldn't fall.

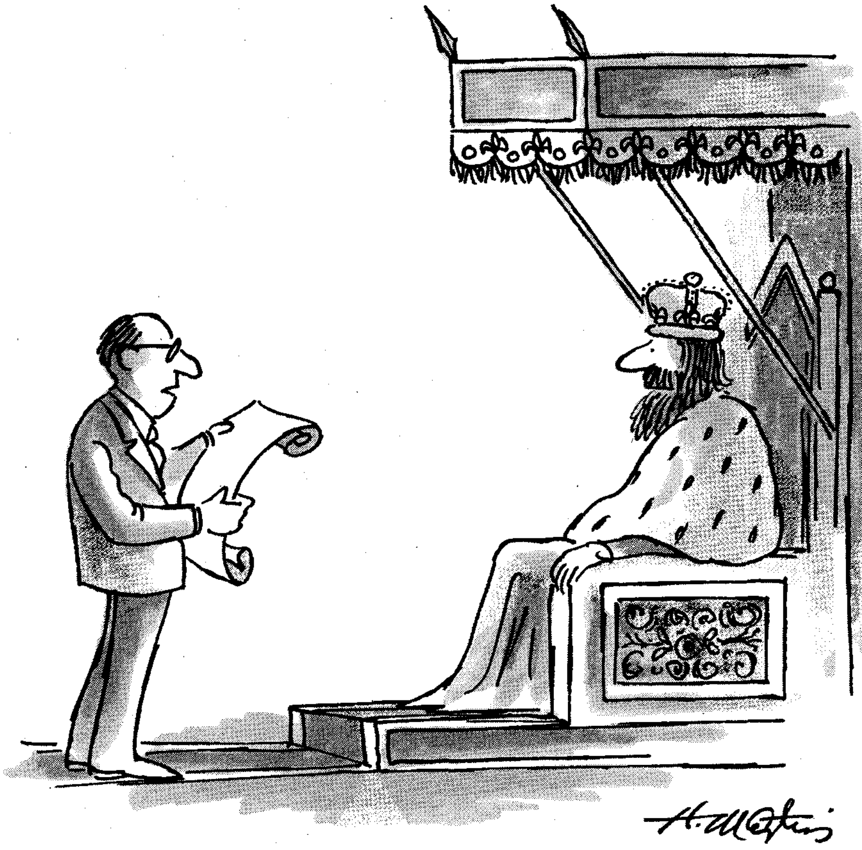
Next door I'm doing laundry. I'm hanging all my best underwear on the back-yard clothesline, pinning it carefully so the wind puffs everything into anatomical shapes. On the other side of the back fence children are playing with cap guns and making realistic dying noises. They are very young children, but they know exactly how to do this. After a time, bored with dying, they begin a ritual, listless argument. Did not. Did so. Did not. Did so. Bored with this, too, they let it lapse. "I know all four swear words," one of them announces.

There's a scent of autumn in the air, something smoky. When night comes, pockets of mist fill the low places. The mist is like smoke. The smoke is like mist. Dreams become almost visible. In Clark's dream my house is on fire. The house has grown a second story, and he has to climb a ladder to save me. Everything is a total loss. I'm endlessly grateful.

Cliff, the son of Clark, dreams that he comes home from school to find his parents' house in ashes. He parks his bicycle on the sidewalk and scuffs through the wreckage thoughtfully. It was sort of a dumb house anyway, he thinks. "A terrible tragedy," someone says. "But you know, I presume, that they weren't your true parents."

In my dream, flames surround the fire station like a crown. They hiss and snap and shudder. But, as in a dream, nothing is consumed. Burning and burning. I keep trying to wake up. Things could go on this way forever.

—JEAN THOMPSON



"Your Majesty, a messenger has just arrived from Hong Kong. Your suit is ready."

●

ELSEWHERE N.C. TEACHERS
INCREASINGLY FROM
—*Charlotte (N.C.) Observer.*

Time headline writer used to work at?

PROFILES

MODERN GIRL

CHIYO UNO got the idea for "Confessions of Love" in 1929, after meeting with Seiji Togo. She had been writing a novel, and decided to include a lovers' suicide. Since she felt that she could not quite convey the emotional pressures of such a moment without further research, she telephoned Togo, an artist who had just emerged from a highly publicized double-suicide attempt, and asked if he would please give her some insight into the man's side of the experience. Togo agreed to meet her at the White Night, a Tokyo bar. When he arrived, he was the image of post-suicide-pact chic, for his neck, which he had slashed in the attempt, was swathed in a white bandage. Togo did not immediately tell his story. "Can't talk here," he said. "Too many of my friends around." He invited Uno back to his home in the Tokyo suburbs. There they spent the night together on the bloodstained futon that had been used for the failed suicides. Even now, nearly sixty years later, Uno savors the dazzlement of that evening. "We fell upon each other like animals," she recalled in a recent conversation. "You see, it was the bandage on his neck that got to me." The invitation to sleep on the celebrated futon also won her reckless heart, and although she had arrived with only her handbag as luggage, intending the briefest of social visits, she remained with Togo for five years. Uno came away from this union with a vermillion-lacquered bureau that had once belonged to the novelist Junichiro Tanizaki and a new flair for color. (Togo had a way with white.) She also made a detailed record of Togo's reminiscences, which she eventually shaped into "Confessions of Love," her most popular work.

From "Living in Search of Happiness," published by Kairyu-sha©

At the time Chiyo Uno began to live with Seiji Togo, she had already established a name for herself in the Japanese literary world. Not only had her fiction been well received by the critics but she was noted for the immense dash of her private life. She had always been a beauty: her skin was perfect; her eyes glistened like dew on plums. She demonstrated other important gifts as well—in matters of prose style and romantic catastrophe.

Chiyo Uno is one of the very few Japanese women with an established literary reputation, having made her mark early by publishing stormy love stories based upon her own entanglements. While other women writers of her generation wrote of social issues (the excesses of the militarists, hunger on city streets), she stuck to the smaller world of personal heartbreak. She became famous, even notorious, for her passionate descriptions of torment beside a flickering Tokyo brazier and of frail, frail shoulders trembling beneath a loose kimono. Beginning in her early twenties, she married more times than any nice Japanese girl would ever care to admit. Along the way, there were other companions—real, or cooked up by the scandalmongers. "You have to see Uno's life in the context of Japanese literature," a Japanese writer friend told me, with a smile. "Our fiction since 'The Tale of Genji,' a thousand years ago, always has the hero flitting from one woman to the next. Uno-san was different. She took the man's role. She was a female Genji, and she went from man to man. You sense also that she didn't choose the men out of respect for their minds but because their faces were pretty—just as men choose women in our books. And, remember, it wasn't simply lust that drove her on but *kokotsu*—a kind of rapturous enchantment that for us Japanese is always a very kind, very gentle emotion."

Chiyo Uno was not content merely to drop demure hints from behind her fan about a new lover's arrival. She went on to describe his every idiosyncrasy in racy Japanese for her reading public. As if this were not enough, she started a side business designing kimonos, her unconventional fabrics, splashed with cherry blossoms, further decorating a flamboyant public image. Now ninety years old, she looks with a wry eye upon the hyperactive Japanese media as they still try to decide whether she is a literary eccentric, too sex-crazy for serious consideration, or Chiyo Uno, writer, designer, femme fatale—a sturdy and independent modern woman. In the past few years, there has been a new burst of celebrity, because her autobiography, a best-seller published in 1983, has been made into a television series, starring a popular actress. And last spring Tokyo's Teikoku Theatre staged a new production of her 1957 novella, "Ohan," with an extraordinary rainstorm and a cast composed in part of surrealistic dolls from Bunraku, Japan's puppet theatre.

I had recently completed an English translation of "Confessions of Love," and on a trip to Japan I went to pay my respects to the author. "Ohan" had just opened, and she was busy with the attendant festivities. Uno lives in Aoyama, one of Tokyo's most expensive neighborhoods, and owns her apartment house. Her kimono shop takes up the first floor. Now that the price of land has skyrocketed in Japan's big cities, mention of her address invariably incites envy in younger Japanese writers. ("Let's write! To live in Aoyama!") The cherry trees were not yet in bloom in Tokyo the afternoon of my visit, but an arrangement of early-flowering wild mountain-cherry branches had been brought into her living room, as if to promise that spring was on the way. A Bunraku puppet, handmade by a master in Shikoku, brooded wonderfully beside a collection of scrolls and ceramic bowls. As I sat down to tea on the tatami floor, she apologized for wearing an everyday kimono. Uno's hair is reddish-orange and rises in a pile of curly locks. Her complexion, beneath layers of face powder, remains relatively unwrinkled. Small (just under five feet), she has complained in print about her thinness, yet she wears a kimono majestically and sits with unwavering posture on the floor pillow. Since she is so very old now, the peppy red hair and fastidious makeup do little to distract attention from her thick eyeglasses or failing hearing. Having cultivated the appearance of an ageless romantic, she is said to be fussy about photographs.

That day, she was not pleased with the production of "Ohan," and seemed especially glum about the actor playing the hero. The weak-willed and vacillating lover Kanoya—a stock Uno male—had been portrayed with what she considered excessive vigor. "He's too good an actor for the part," she explained, in a shaky falsetto. "If you go to see it, be sure to go late in the run. The acting troupes don't rehearse much these days, and it shows."

Uno is modest enough about her literary efforts to find a meeting with her translator an excruciatingly embarrassing experience. Having one of her books published in English invites too much direct, non-Japanese-style praise for comfort. At first, it was easier for us to pretend that she had never written "Confessions of Love" and that I had never translated it. Given more time, and more vague remarks about how cold the Tokyo winter had been, we might even have been persuaded that neither of us was actually present. Since she chose to stick to earthier subjects, we discussed the foods that would insure long life (she believes in spinach) and the importance of a proper attitude ("I have no interest in dying, because I always think that tomorrow might bring something exciting"). She almost never appears now

THE HAND

Between the coffee plantation and the dream
the kid paints a golden star
on the chapel wall,
and nothing else resists the painting hand.
The hand grows, and paints
the life meant to be endured, not painted.
The hand is always composing,
musically phrasing
whatever escaped the hard work of the Creation,
and dreams up trials of form
and corrects the oblique with the aerial
and plants tiny daisies of good will in the luggage of the lost.
The hand grows larger and makes
of the repetitive everyday world the world we want in a flash.
The hand knows the color of color
and uses it to clothe the naked and the invisible.
Everything makes sense because everything has a (new) color.
Everything exists because it was painted as though it were a magical orange
that instead of quenching thirst
increases it
to the limits of feeling on earth, man's home.

Between the dream and the coffee plantation,
between war and peace,
between martyrs, bums,
musicians, rafts, kites,
between the farm machinery of Israel,
the memory of Giotto, and the first whiff of Brazil,
between love and the office
the hand chooses:
all the little boys, even the most unfortunate,
will be as dizzyingly
happy as the multiple
portrait, pinkish-green in two generations,
of the child balanced like a flower in the cosmos,
and the hand, humble, domestic, and useful, grows enormous
with its power to enchant.

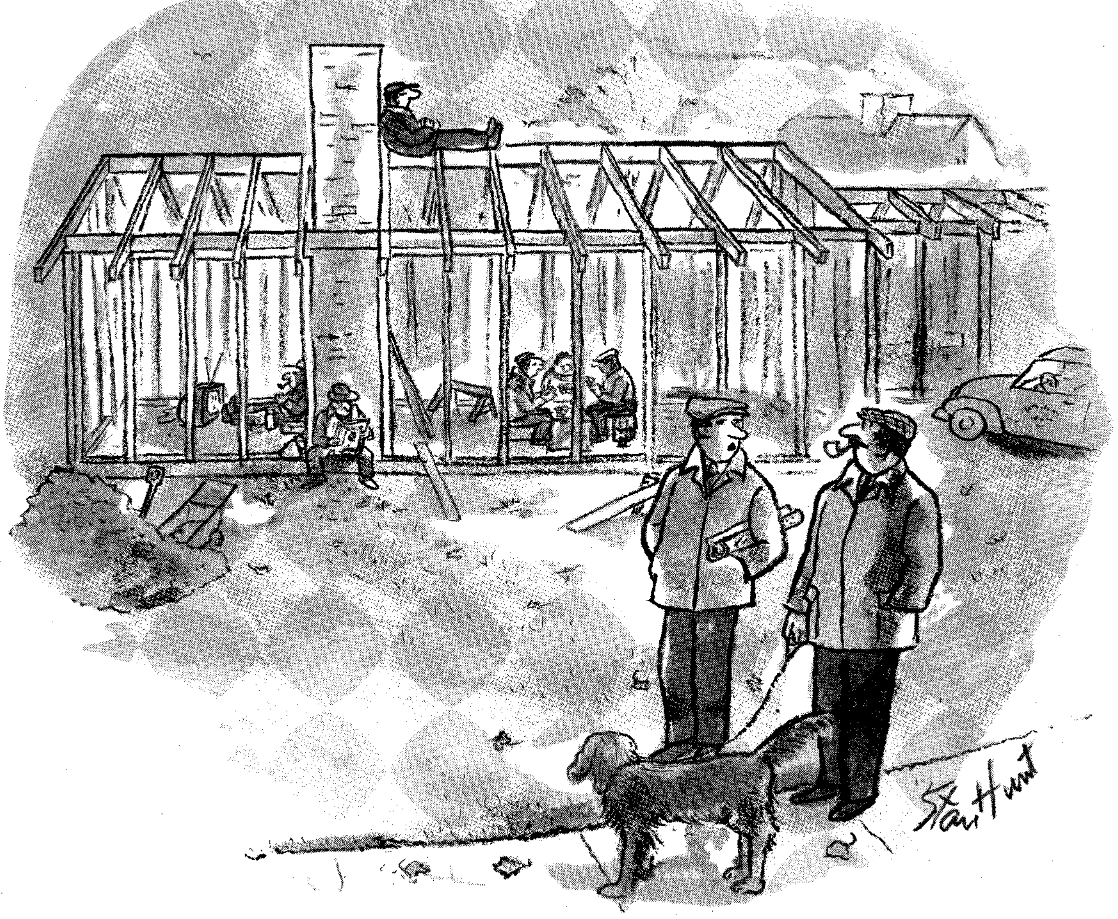
Now there is a truth without anguish
even for the anguished self.
Pain becomes rain for flowers, and the world
seen, the world felt.
And, having done what it came to do,
leaving the rest to the doctors of Byzantium
and saying no more,
back flies
the infinite hand,
the blue-eyed hand of Cândido Portinari.

—CARLOS DRUMMOND DE ANDRADE

(*Translated, from the Portuguese, by Ron Horning.*)

• •

without a female assistant, who vehemently guards her boss's literary reputation and in general keeps the rabble out. This assistant was clearly concerned about a recent rash of scholarly foreign women who had been showing an interest in Uno. It was particularly alarming to contemplate the possibility that these foreign women—a conspicuously unfashionable lot—would write essays transforming the life-loving, glamorous Chiyo Uno into a bookish, carelessly turned-out woman not unlike themselves. In her tenth decade, Uno would like to forget her hardships and the long years she spent on some of her literary projects, and glory instead in the romantic wars she fought across various Japanese cities. And who can blame her for taking to the idea that her writings were spontaneously dashed off while she was on the fast train to Izu, en route to yet another hot-springs rendezvous? "Whenever people start to talk about literary theories," the assistant informed me darkly, "our *sensei* always tells them to go out and do some real work." Uno herself seemed more worried about an issue less important to sober members of the literary establishment: "This playbill says that I married only famous men, but the truth is that I married them and then they became famous."



"Housing is sluggish again."

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Chiyo Uno's lack of interest in literary exegesis is not surprising, since throughout her long career she never insisted upon her links to high art. A lovely face, after all, helped her escape from a lifetime of preparing tea in provincial Iwakuni, where she was born in 1897. She started out as a country girl, accustomed to walking barefoot through the winter snows, and ended by becoming one of those Japanese women who somehow find the courage to stride off as they like, leaving a rigid social structure behind them.

The situation of women is not an item that Japanese patriots usually include in their lists of the nation's greatest achievements. Sweeping generalizations about the female plight are dangerous, and always subject to clarification, but perhaps it is safe to state that feudal Japanese codes of ethics, whose influences are still felt today, do not show much enthusiasm for the liberation of women. Nevertheless, there have always been Japanese women who have defied social conventions. These women have been strong, very strong indeed, and even the fiercest female warriors of the West have cause to envy their daring.

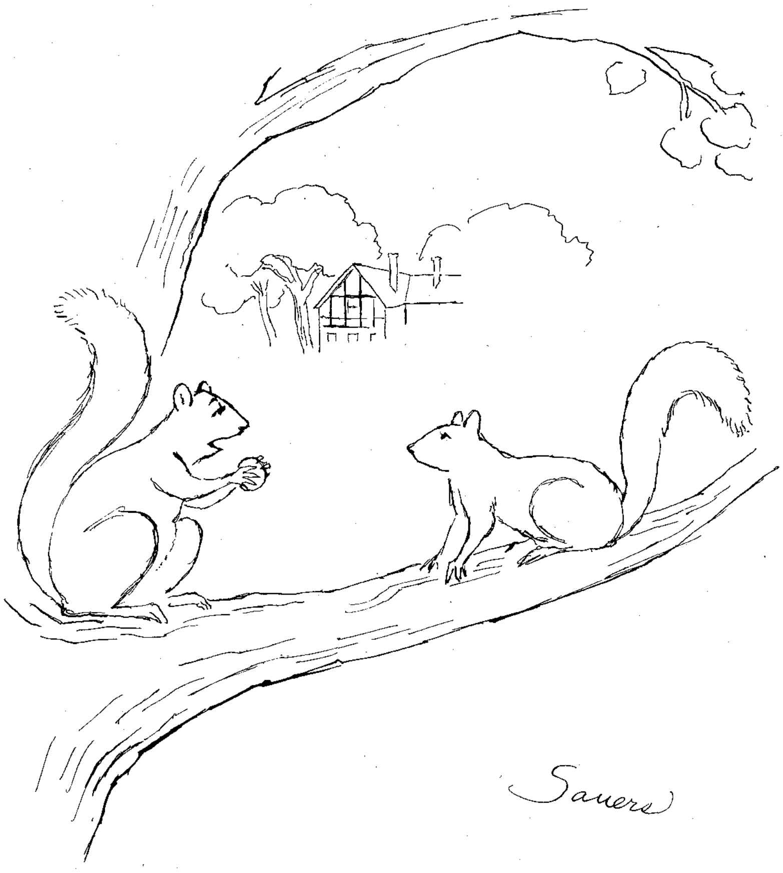
In the nineteen-twenties, Uno's heyday, a Japanese woman was expected to enter into a marriage arranged by her family. She subsequently spent several decades under the hearty supervision of her mother-in-law, no doubt dreaming only of the moment when she would become an impossible mother-in-law herself. From the start, Uno ignored the Confucian teaching that a female was to live in successive submission to her father, her husband, and, finally, her sons. Her appearance caused problems in Iwakuni, since she could never bring herself to blend quietly into the population. She had little tolerance for boredom and never begrudged the extra effort required to entertain or shock. In the opinion of the principal of a primary school where she taught as a very young woman, Uno-san dressed in kimonos too flashy for a country schoolteacher. To make matters worse, she had become convinced that her dark complexion was magically, beautifully transformed by face powder, and she would not go anywhere without her makeup. When she arrived at the schoolyard wearing makeup for the first time, her spectacular glow caused a sensation among teachers and students alike. She received the compliment of a love letter written in blood, and then a marriage proposal that ended in a sexual assault. Finally, she was forced to resign from her teaching job, after becoming involved in a forbidden romance with another teacher. In "Tales of My Youth," one of her numerous memoirs, she recalls, "The cherry trees were in full bloom when I at last had to resign from the school. They didn't want to tell the children or the people of the village the embarrassing truth about why I was leaving, and they decided to make up a pleasanter story, to keep the school from looking bad. So the principal of the school suggested that I say I was leaving to study in Tokyo. One morning, the schoolchildren were assembled in the playground so that I could say my farewells. I know that you'll find this strange, but although I should have been embarrassed to say goodbye to the children under those circumstances, instead I decked myself out in quite a costume for the occasion and went off to school. I completely forgot that many teachers and children would be there looking at me, since all I wanted was to see my boyfriend. I was dying to have him think, Isn't she cute! Isn't she pretty! I did my hair up like a geisha and wound a dotted pink ribbon around it. Now, where on earth could you find a woman teacher in a purple formal skirt, her hair decorated with a dotted pink ribbon? I had no sooner gone through the school gate than I was called to the principal's office. He told me that I could not possibly appear in front of the children dressed like that. He sternly instructed me to hide in the janitor's small office, at the side of the back gate, until the sun went down. I sat despondently in the janitor's room. From the high window I could peep at the school playground, where the cherry trees were all in bloom. Many children had come, and since the principal's words were carried by the breeze I could hear him saying, 'I would like to tell you that the teacher you like so much has suddenly become ill and cannot be with us today to say farewell. When she gets better, she will be leaving us for Tokyo.' "

Uno went to Korea to escape from this scandal, but soon realized that the beloved colleague she had left behind correctly feared that his future would be wrecked by the ferocity of her passions. "I waited for his letters," her memoir continues. "I lived only for the day I would receive something. I didn't hear from him for a long time, and then, one day, I received a letter of farewell. He said he was afraid of love. He was afraid of me, who was so blinded by love. He wanted us to part! He said that maybe someday, if we had the chance, we might meet again. It was full of the meaningless, vague promises that everyone writes in such letters."

Never one to avoid a messy scene, she rushed back from Seoul to confront the cowardly gentleman. Coincidentally—on a whim, she now declares—she bought a knife on her way to his home. "I hadn't brought any souvenirs from Seoul for my family. . . . And we really needed a good kitchen knife. I thought it would make my mother happy." Her boyfriend's discovery of this weapon stuck into the obi of her kimono added considerably to the complexity of the moment.

This kind of hot confrontation is at the heart of Uno's fiction, and once her writing career was launched she would waste no time after each experience in getting every breathless moment down on paper. Her intense tales of love lost, revived, then lost again can be romantic fluff, but at her best she captures a very human craziness, as her lovers try to settle matters between them once and for all. Her prose style has also brought her much praise: "rich, supple, sensual," according to one enchanted Japanese critic, and "overflowing with womanly feelings." Uno's characters tend to be impulsive, and the men—more often than not utterly despicable—are memorable. The women bear a remarkable resemblance to the author. They often love unwisely, gaining our sympathy with the vastness of their affections. These fervent women throw themselves at one undeserving man after another, but at least have the canniness and resilience to pick themselves up after things have calmed down somewhat. They are a rarity among fictional Japanese females even today, for they have boundless confidence, occasionally gloating over their own exploits.

In recent years, however, Uno has turned away from these energetic heroines. She has chosen to interpret her passionate females' doings in a cooler light. When we met in Tokyo, she was reluctant to dwell upon her heroines' madder escapades—especially those that suggested a mild form of erotic derangement. Times have changed, of course, and what was forbidden decades ago can, with a little fiddling, become a mark of mod-



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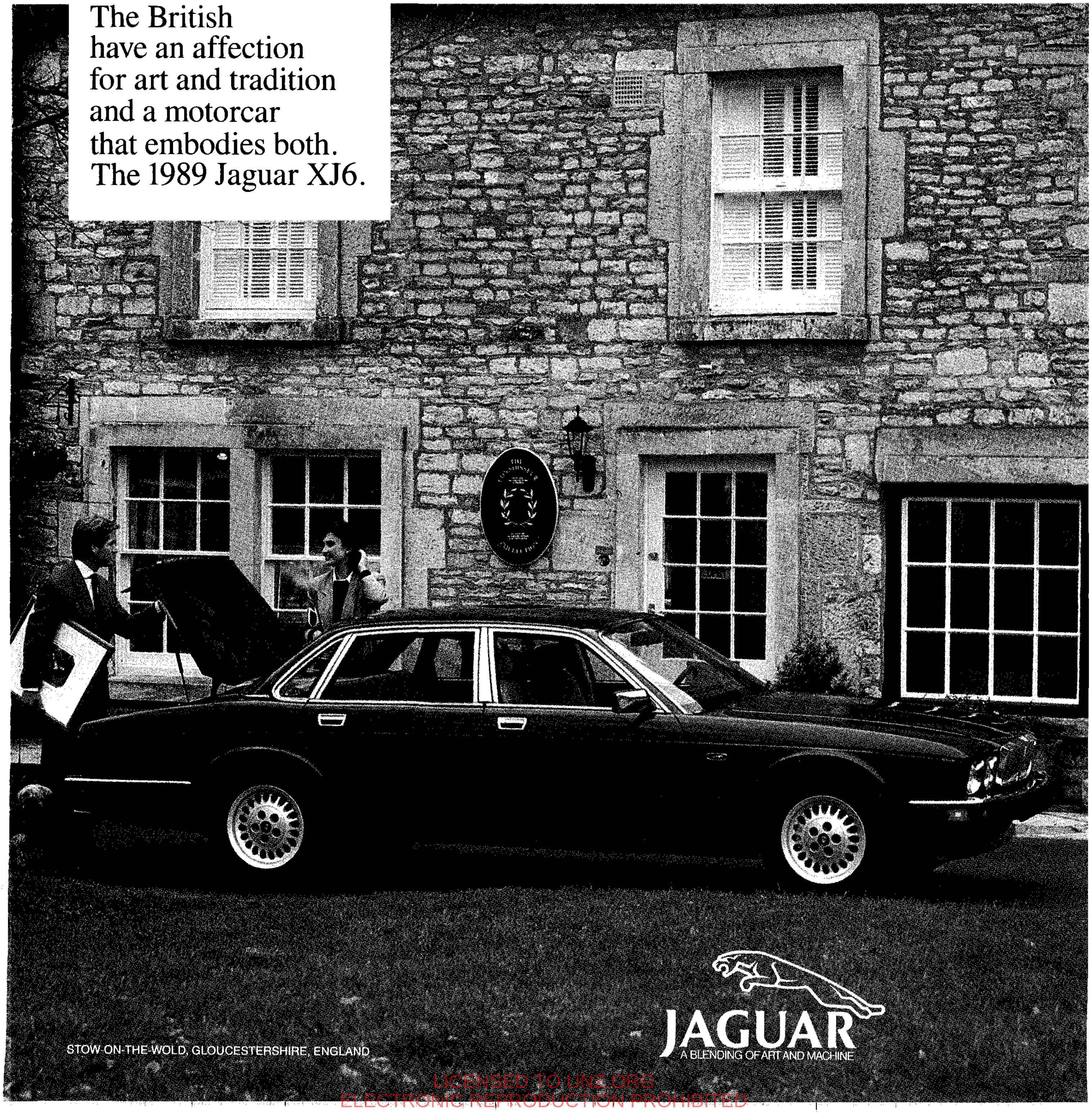
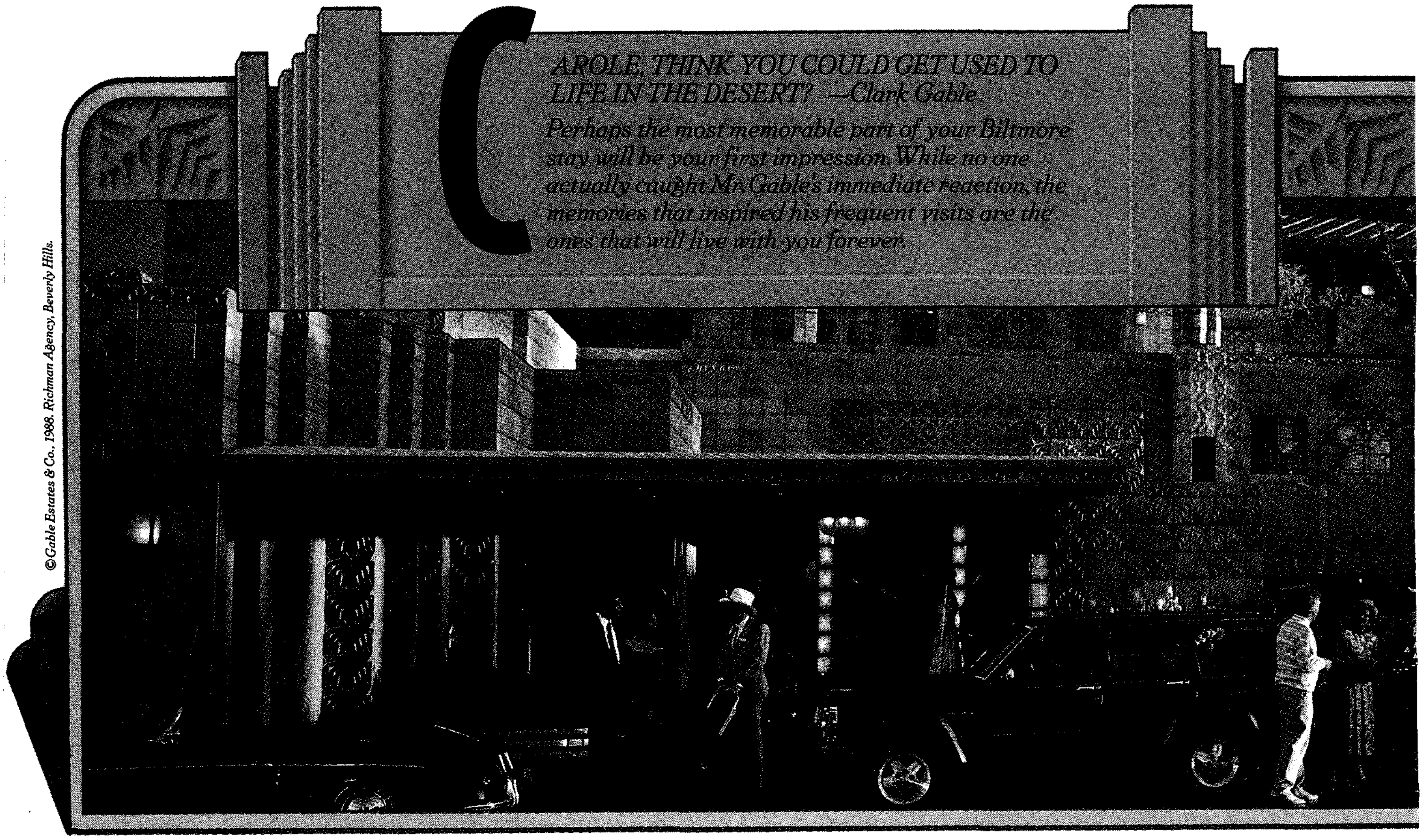


ern assertiveness or self-reliance. Uno has lately become a kind of literary family counsellor for her fans (she has even written an advice column for the newspapers), and family counsellors don't always like to remember moments of lunacy when they turned up at their boyfriend's home with a knife or took too many sleeping pills to drown their sorrows. "I believe that cheerfulness is a virtue and melancholy a sin," she told me, going to the trouble of inscribing the calligraphy for this sentence in my notebook. "That's really how I would sum up my view of life."

This gloss is perhaps permitted a grande dame of Japanese letters looking back on the past from a magnificent sitting room; indeed, the record shows that Uno remained relatively cheerful through it all, but that she was also willful, fickle, ambitious, shrewd, and, frequently, hysterical. There is the matter, for example, of her early days in Tokyo, where she arrived in 1917, not long after the heartbreaking episode with the teacher. According to her present version, she was the simplest of farm girls let loose in the big city. She arrived there, at the very center of the universe, in the company of her cousin Tadashi Fujimura, who turned out to be the most luckless of her husbands. Her family had been hard at work trying to get her respectably married off, and her cousin, excellent husband material, was the prize they sought. As for Fujimura, he thought he had found for a lifetime companion a beauty, a seamstress, a cook. He would soon know better.

They took an apartment on the second floor of a beautician's house, on a lane near Tokyo Imperial University (the present University of Tokyo), and Fujimura matriculated there. "But the funds sent to us from home arrived erratically, and so he just registered at the university and never attended classes," Uno recalls in her autobiography. "He worked at one of the government offices, while I also worked—at times as a clerk for a magazine publisher, at times as a private tutor—but these jobs did not bring us enough money. . . . Finally, I became a waitress at the Enrakuken, a Western-style restaurant on a corner in Hongo Sanchome."

The restaurant was just across the street from Chuo Koron Sha, a noted publishing house. In the brief period that Uno waited on tables at this establishment—she stayed only eighteen days—she managed to meet some of Japan's leading editors and writers, who often stopped off for beer and snacks on their way to Chuo Koron. While Uno's recollections of those days insist upon her provincial innocence, one can make out the crasser notes of a determined country girl hustling for a place in the wide world: "Because I worked at Enrakuken, my fate took an unexpected turn. There was a guest who always arrived for lunch. . . . He had a healthy-looking, ruddy face, and wore fashionable Western-style clothes over his muscular body. He never said a word, always sat himself down at one of my tables, ate with raging speed, emptied a glass of beer in one gulp, then, after paying for the meal, plunked down a big silver fifty-sen coin for a tip and quickly left. I never in my wildest dreams would have believed that this was the famous Choin Takita, editor-in-chief of Chuo Koron, just across the street from us. . . . While I worked there, Ryu-


CAROLE, THINK YOU COULD GET USED TO LIFE IN THE DESERT? —Clark Gable
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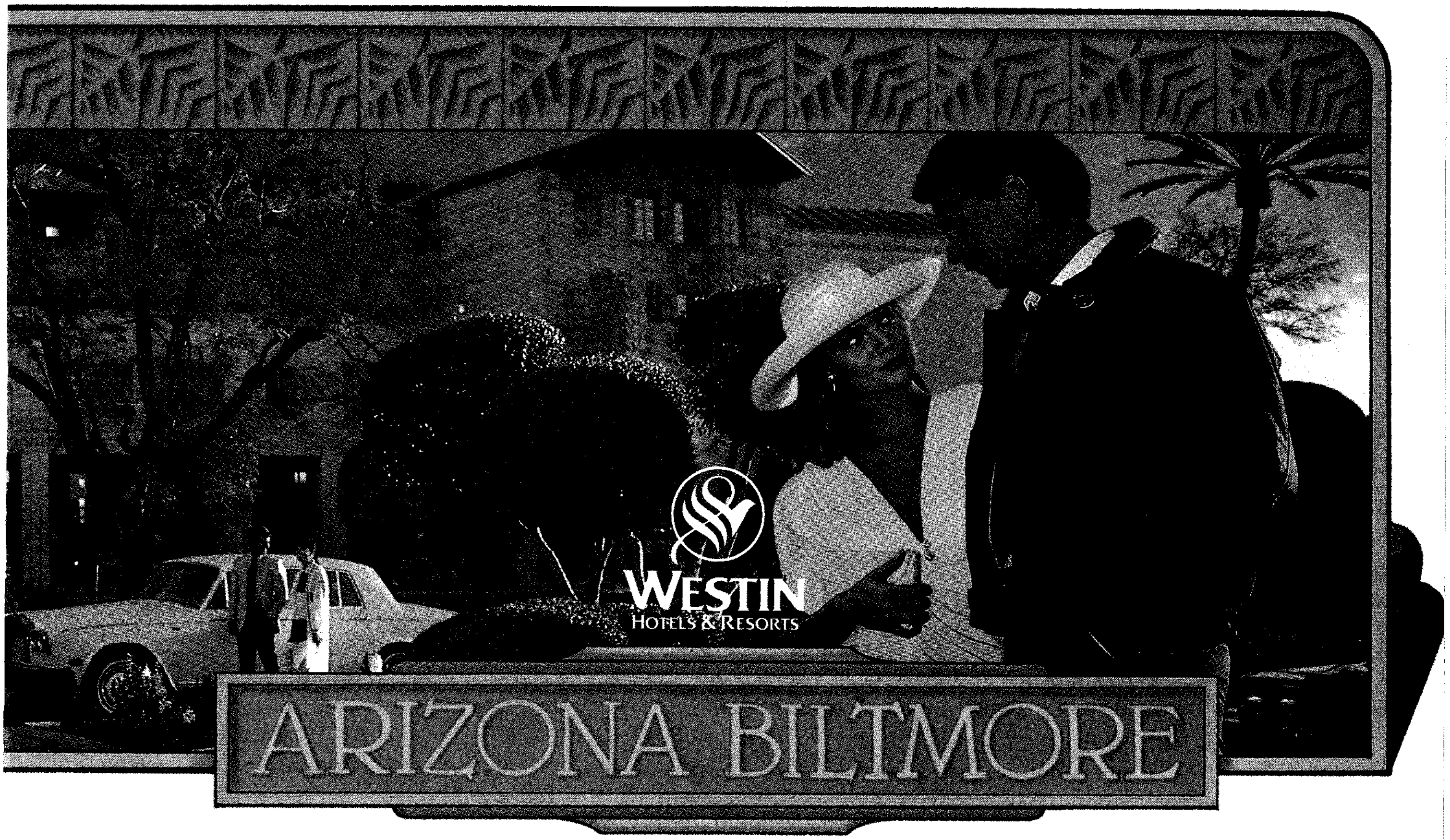
nosuke Akutagawa, Masao Kume—literary people so famous that even I recognized them—came into the restaurant with Choin Takita. Toko Kon, who wasn't exactly what you could call a writer or an artist then, would also come around, and immediately look over at me. He'd wait outside every night until the restaurant closed and see me home."

Fiction based on actual events has long been a staple of Japanese literature. For generations, Japanese authors have fought with their fathers, eloped with geishas, joined Communist cells, recanted, attempted to hang themselves, and then rushed back to their studies to transcribe reliable accounts for their novels, short stories, and poems. Ryunosuke Akutagawa—the creator of "Rashomon," and one of Japan's most famous literary suicides—served as witness to Chiyo Uno's first days in Tokyo. Although better known for his imaginary tales, even Akutagawa depended on the facts occasionally. He took an interest in Uno, and she is said to be the model for the waitress in his story "Scallions." He immediately discerned that here was a young woman who would not be boiling noodles for the rest of her life.

"Okimi-san must have been fifteen or sixteen, but looked more adult," Akutagawa writes of his fictional waitress. "Her skin was white, her eyes cool and knowing. Even though the tip of her nose curved upward, she was a regular beauty. Her hair was parted in the center and stuck with a hairpin of forget-me-nots." The narrator of "Scallions" reveals that Okimi-san was not an ordinary waitress in her private interests, either:

> Let us peek way down into the second floor of a beautician's house on a nearby lane. . . . This is where Okimi-san dwells when she's not at the café. The second floor is a six-tatami room with a low ceiling. . . . There on the old tea table she uses for a desk is a collection of not very new books in Western bindings—"The Collected Poems of Toson," "The Life of Sumako Matsui," "Carmen," and some others. . . . I regret to report that I don't see a single one of my books there.

The narrator is not the only man to find Okimi-san noteworthy; a creative sort named Tanaka, based on the young and eventually well-known author Toko Kon, is thoroughly smitten: "The talented Tanaka writes poems, plays the violin, paints in oils, has worked as an actor, is good at poetry games and can also play the Satsuma lute. But the problem is that no one knows which is his real occupation and which a hobby." As for Okimi-san, she is ready to fall in love, and Tanaka, so abundantly blessed with arty gifts, seems the likely candidate. But Okimi-san has a cagey side, and at times—when she is gazing at the moon, or hearing her heart roar like the wind-swept sea—she senses "a dark cloud of uneasiness" passing over her soul. Astute instincts finally lead her elsewhere, on the very day that Tanaka takes her out on a big date. He is dreaming of escorting her to an intimate dinner, when the young couple happens to pass a vegetable stall bursting with turnips, potatoes, carrots. In a moment, Okimi-san is jolted back to reality; she sees that the scallions for sale that day are very cheap. "Okimi-san had until this moment been intoxicated with thoughts of love and art, but her real life, which dozed within this bliss, woke up in an instant." She thinks of all the money she could save, and bolts for the stall: "I'd like two bunches of



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scallions, please." With this, Tanaka's romantic visions of an evening at a restaurant vanish: "What floated up before his eyes was a mountain of scallions, and a tag that said they were four sen a bunch."

Akutagawa's irreverent story goes a long way toward fixing the young Chiyo Uno's character definitively, for Okimi-san's alternately dreamy and clever voice can be heard in many of her writings. Like that fictional waitress, Uno usually had enough of her wits about her so that even at her most overwrought she could keep a lookout for bargains in scallions. Her men, too, tended to be handsome dandies like Tanaka—artistic, but extremely slow in their reactions to everyday phenomena. Like Okimi-san, Uno occasionally wished to be viewed as a lovely and ladylike force in the background, essentially a homebody, strong but pliant, forbearing, the epitome of a docile Japanese female. But her hardy personality gets in the way time after time, and, try as she may, her actions do not always coincide with the ideal.

In 1920, Uno and Fujimura moved to Sapporo, on Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, but even in that snow-covered city she remained alert to possibility and never forgot the influential friends she had made in Tokyo. In Sapporo, "the winter came early," she writes in another memoir, "My Literary Reminiscences." "The snow reached the house's eaves and throughout the day I could hear the sleigh bells." Although she says that she was absolutely content to be at home waiting for her husband's return each evening, domestic tranquillity was never Chiyo Uno's forte. It is difficult to believe that only the Hokkaido snowflakes were on her mind as she watched the blizzards blow outside her window. Eventually, she took up sewing to earn money, and soon bought a rather Spartan house for herself and her flabbergasted husband. It was the first of more than a dozen residences she was to acquire or build over the coming decades. Among them were a simple mountain retreat suitable for Zen austerities, a Japanese estate with long corridors in the manner of Kyoto's finest villas, and a Western-style residence built along the lines of the Parthenon. "I always build a house when I start something new in my life," she has written. "That's my custom. I'm like a snail crawling along with a shell on its back. I build a house, and then I start roaming around. Maybe I feel that by building a house I'll stabilize the insecure life I'm about to embark upon."

While she was still sweetly cooking meals for Fujimura in Sapporo, she came upon a Tokyo newspaper that asked readers to submit short stories for a contest. She had started to weary of carting her sewing all over the countryside for her customers. She needed money, but she also wanted to be able to work at home. She decided to write. "Remember, I don't want people to think that I am a great literary lady, with many ideas about literature," she told me firmly. "I wrote for money, and, frankly speaking, I wish I had earned more."

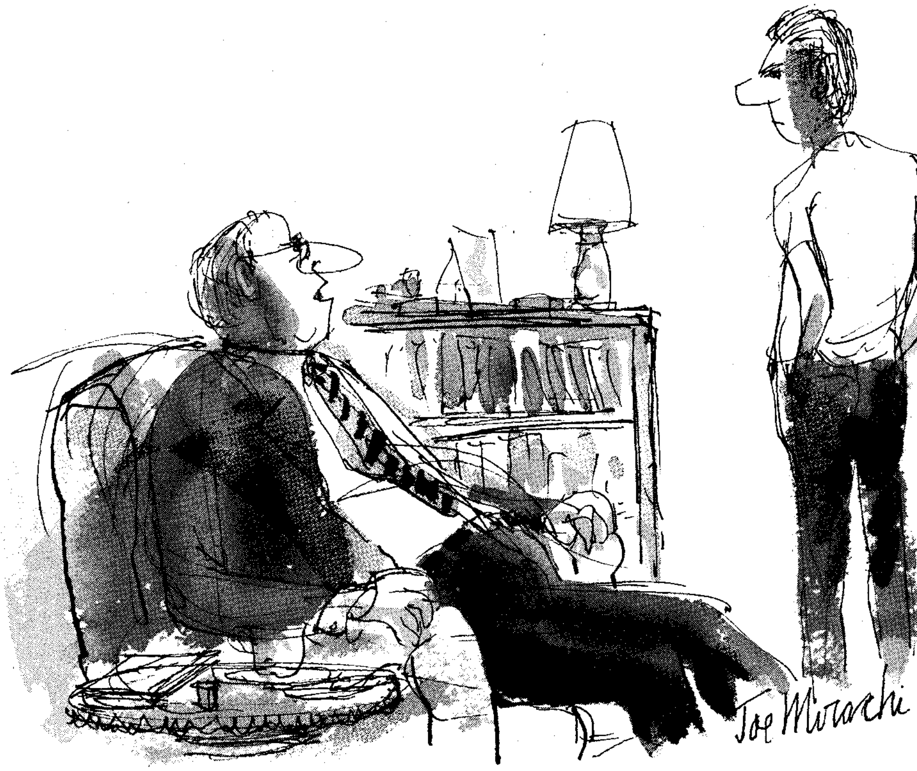
She submitted a story entitled "The Powdered Face," and won first prize. Exhilarated by her success, and stupefied by the amount of money a single short story could bring, she immediately set out to write another one, and sent it to no less a personage than Choin Takita, the editor of Chuo Koron, who had left her all those fifty-sen tips at the restaurant. When she received no reply about the fate of this manuscript, Uno resolutely set off for Tokyo, in the spring of 1922, to find out if anyone had even read it. She fully intended to return to her husband in a few days, she says, and left a heap of dirty clothes and a stack of dirty dishes to be attended to upon her return. Once she reached Tokyo, she headed straight for Takita's office. He answered her question by showing her the latest issue of the publishing house's monthly magazine, in which her story appeared.

"All people have one or two times in their lives that they look back on and say, 'Oh, I was happy then,' " she wrote, in "Tales of My Youth." "Well, today I'll tell you the story of a time when I was really happy. . . . I wasn't some miserable girl anymore. I was a woman writer!"

Emotionally extravagant in joy as in disaster, Uno just had to go home to Iwakuni to tell her family the good news. Even in her most jubilant moments, she was still the beauty, and beauties understand the importance of dressing for the part: "I spent a whole day running around Tokyo and bought a fancy kimono outfit as dazzling as I could find, a flowing lace shawl, and a parasol. Ah, that night I put on a resplendent kimono such as I had never pictured even in my dreams, threw the flowing lace shawl over my shoulders, and entered the train. My face was painted as brightly as a flower." She got off at the station from which she had departed with so little distinction years before. "Please imagine what I looked like. When the train arrived, my mother and five brothers and sisters were waiting for me on the platform, lined up like sparrows. . . . 'Okaka!' I called my mother just as I used to, long ago. . . . I was so elated that I sashayed out to the front of the station like a queen. . . . There were rickshaws lined up in front to pick up customers. 'Okaka! Get in!' I said. 'Taro-san, you, too, and Jiro-san and Hana-chan and Saburo-san and Shiro-chan, get in. Let's all go,' I yelled, calling for seven rickshaws. In the countryside in those days, you didn't take a rickshaw only for convenience. (The station was very close to town and you could easily walk.) Brides took rickshaws. Or geishas hurrying off to their customers. And bands of actors who came to towns with their plays would ride around town in rickshaws waving banners advertising their performances. . . . Thanks to the way we rode home in our rickshaws like an acting troupe, before the night was out the whole town knew that its strange girl had returned home."

In the excitement of her success, Uno forgot the charm of Sapporo's sleigh bells, and the husband she had left behind. There are accounts of telegrams, emergency visits by in-laws, grim silences, but she was obdurate. This was the end of her brief tenure as a respectable Japanese housewife. She has always had trouble justifying this sudden change of plans; when a heroine in one of her stories finds herself in the same situation, Uno blandly speculates: "She didn't think about her husband who was waiting for her. Was it because Hokkaido was quite far from where she was in the countryside? Or maybe she had forgotten him because there was still snow on the ground in Hokkaido but out in the country the cherry trees were already in bloom."

How could she think of returning to Sapporo when in her mind's eye she was in the latest nest she had found for herself in Tokyo, papering the shoji screens with her manuscript money? She had gone to Tokyo intending to stay only long enough to find out about her manuscript, but, once there, she



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gave up her former existence and started afresh with gusto. "When I look back," she has mused with all the deadpan philosophical objectivity she can muster, "I see that the year and eight months of married life in Hokkaido was the period of my life most filled with hope. That was the only time I ever lived a regular life, as one of the people."

Of all Chiyo Uno's adventures, this abandonment of her first husband does not go down well with contemporary Japanese women. Many applaud her verve in other instances, and her psychological ruggedness. But leaving Fujimura behind without a gentle word bespeaks cruelty and that most heinous of Japanese character flaws—*wagamama*, or "selfishness." In Japan, even a *tonderu onna*—a liberated, "flying woman"—is expected to have a kind heart. A young Japanese woman television producer who has taken an interest in Uno's life clucks her tongue over such behavior: "She would just leave the clothes hanging out on the line and go off with a new man. That kind of thing gets to be a habit."

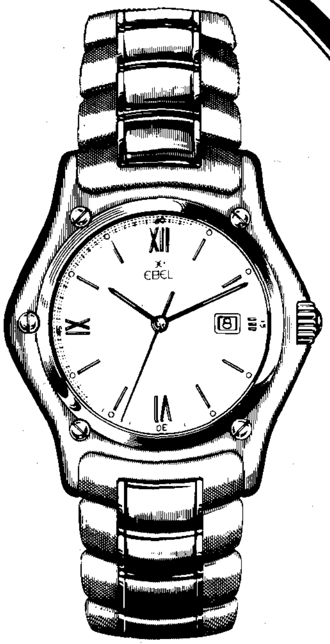
THE cause of Uno's new burst of energy was not difficult to find: she had met her next husband, the writer Shiro Ozaki. The facts regarding this particular romance have been blurred by fictional accounts that both principals inevitably contributed later, but the literary evidence has it that she responded with total sympathy to his painful stutter, while he was absolutely disarmed when the *sake* she drank at dinner went to her head. Neither neglects to mention the bohemian allure of the Kiku-Fuji Hotel, where Ozaki lived, up on Kikuzaka Hill, near the University of Tokyo. Of the separate room he discreetly rented for her there Uno notes, "It was of no help in quieting the fires that burned between us." They soon moved to the then sparsely populated district of Magome, some distance from the center of the city. Their home was a small straw-thatched farmhouse, set in a radish patch. In those cramped quarters the two young writers spent their days together.

By the time Uno and Ozaki had set up housekeeping among the radishes, they had earned more than their share of publicity. In 1922, a Japanese wife did not leave her husband for another man, and their activities had made the newspapers. In an autobiographical novel, Ozaki reports that he decided to take the offensive by writing a newspaper article of his own, in which he challenged public opinion by proudly declaring, "I stole her like a wild dog!" Those were the years of "Taisho democracy," when foreign ideas like liberalism and internationalism had great influence in the big cities. Serious thinkers agitated for universal male suffrage and discussed the merits of socialism, Marxism, anarchism. More frivolous citizens investigated jazz, film, and the foxtrot. Among the most visible products of the era was a group of progressive women, Japan's equivalent of the flapper, who came to be called *modan garu* (modern girls)—or *mo-ga*, for short. Their companions were *modan boi* (modern boys), or *mo-bo*. According to the literary critic Hotsuki Ozaki, the *mo-bo* was always something of a fop, commonly associated with fancy clothing, but the more daunting *mo-ga* appeared to have grave intentions behind her up-to-date looks. It was suspected that she sought nothing less than the collapse of the old, repressive Confucian attitude toward women and their role in society. Famous *mo-ga* like the actress Sumako Matsui (whose biography was on Okimi-san's tea table) captured the imagination of the timid and the trapped. Matsui, considered Japan's first modern-style actress, had appeared, most appropriately, as Nora in a 1911 Tokyo production of "A Doll's House." During her extraordinary life, she married, was divorced, and then entered into an unashamed alliance with a married director. When he died, she was inconsolable, and she hanged herself two months later. "I have decided to join my teacher after all," Matsui wrote matter-of-factly in her suicide note. "I ask only that you make sure that we are buried together."

As the *mo-ga* went about, at times shedding her kimono for short-sleeved Western-style dresses and high heels, she cut a terrifying figure. Chiyo Uno was, of course, well on her way to becoming a *mo-ga* supreme, in her rustic abode with her new husband. She showed no remorse over shocking the radish farmers by churning out short stories about the household's daily doings. Soon like-minded literary figures moved in nearby. "My new husband had an open and sunny personality, and every day many guests would come to our tiny home," Uno recalls in "My Literary Reminiscences." "It was all very pleasant and amusing. You might say that we ran a small, fashionable salon there. If we had been living in the middle of town, I am sure that the neighbors would have complained, but we held our small village salon every night until late, and the chanting of the old Naniwabushi ballads and Bon dance songs from Yagi rang out loud and clear across the radish field. . . . In every house, there was dancing, which was then in great fashion, but no one had Western-style rooms. So we would roll mats out over the tatami flooring and the men and women would take each other's hands and dance. Since we danced on mats, our feet would get caught along the edges, and I'm afraid we didn't dance very gracefully."

But Chiyo Uno's transformation into a bona-fide *mo-ga* was not to be complete until she abandoned the old-fashioned long hair style, fastened primly in the back, which Japanese women had traditionally worn with their kimonos. Beyond everything else, writes Hotsuki Ozaki, "the trademark of the *mo-ga* was her bobbed hair." To be strictly correct, the scandalous hair style had to be short at the back and on the sides, with Dutch-boy bangs in front. It was not a haircut to be undertaken casually. Uno writes that she decided to take this huge step in order to look more attractive alongside her new husband, who was a trifle younger than she. "I very seriously thought that if I could just get up enough courage to cut my hair I would definitely look not one, but three or five years younger than Shiro. When I finally screwed up the courage to cut my hair, I looked not three or five years younger but seven years younger."

At times, this daring *mo-ga* haircut produced just the results predicted by dour supporters of the status quo. There was the example of Ineko, the wife of the poet Sakutaro Hagiwara. She took a look at the bobbed Uno and decided to take ten years off her age in the same way. Ineko unfortunately got carried away by her newfound youth and eloped with an eighteen-year-old student. Her husband, left to care for their two young children, was forced to return to his home town of Maebashi. He surprised no one when he took the time during the train ride to write a poem called "Returning Home,"



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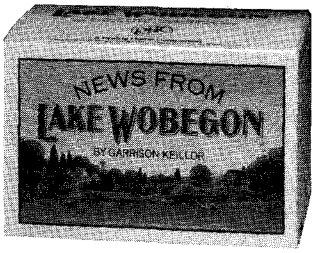

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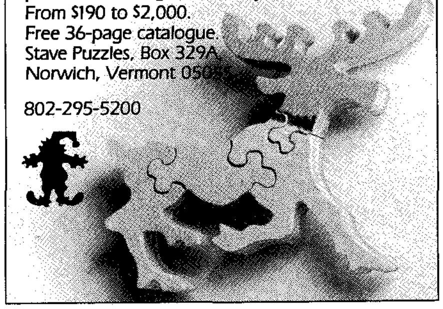
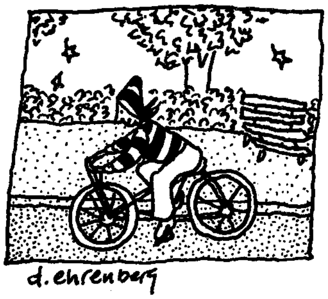


which described, among other things, certain pitfalls of modern Japanese life: "I have not yet seen Joshu Mountain. / In the faint light on the night train / the motherless children cry in their sleep."

After several years on the frontiers of change, Uno, too, began to pay a price. Her life of married bliss in the radish patch began to pall, and she grew increasingly restless. "Our amusing, interesting life continued for some four years, and during all that time we never quarrelled," she relates, in "Essays on My Love Life." "We didn't even exchange harsh words. . . . But although I had this charming, lovable companion, we both started to sense boredom creeping in, even as we enjoyed ourselves." One assumes that the conflicts hovered above the Magome breakfast table and were endured in tense Japanese silence for some time. Uno and her various companions were evidently unaccustomed to sitting down to discuss the state of their relationship, and favored indirect modes of communication, at least at first. This cut down on arguments but also led to misunderstandings, since both sides had to decode the ambiguous messages transmitted by the silences.



Uno began to frequent a spa on the Izu Peninsula to get a change of air and to work on her manuscripts. Her trips away from home grew longer, as she joined the literary crowd already taking the waters there. Most notable among her circle was Japan's future Nobel Prize winner Yasunari Kawabata, who, in a 1929 photograph, stands posed with a group of writers in front of an inn. Artistically draped in an inverness cape and sporting a cane, he looks astonishingly young, while to the side is a brooding but bobbed Chiyo Uno in a gaily patterned kimono. Uno's faltering marriage became the subject of gossip. She insists that she did not think her alliance with Ozaki was over; it was just that they were living apart. "Two people simply could not both be working by their pens when they were living in two rooms, as if in some hotel," she observes. Monogamous felicity was a concept she could revere only after she had packed her bags to move out. Perhaps she had started to see her husband more objectively than was advisable for an adoring wife. She complains, with uncharacteristic scorn, of his sluggishness —in particular, of his behavior during a fire that had started on a mountainside. "He didn't even say, 'Wait a minute! I'm coming!' Ozaki just scooped up the water from the flume and walked over to pour it on the fire. . . . It was like watching a slow-motion movie, the way he lumbered up to help me." To judge from the killingly deliberate pace of Ozaki's fiction, there may have been some justification for Uno's annoyance.

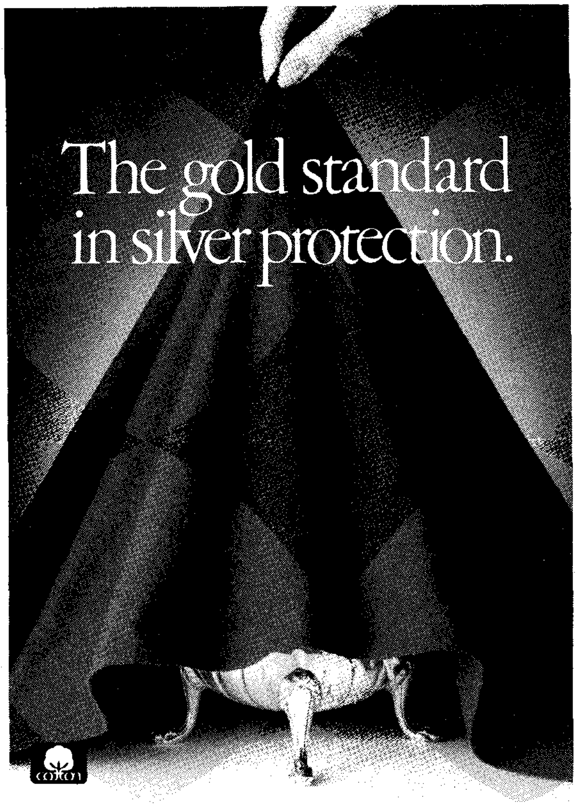
Back in Tokyo, Ozaki was not idle; he was already employing the details of their breakup in his next literary work. He creates a cold portrait of himself, while depicting Uno's distress over this failed marriage as enormous. "Next time we see each other," pleads the frequently absent though penitent wife to her writer husband in one of his stories, "I'll be like the sweet young girl I was when we first met. It'll be just the same as when we slept together in Ueno. I'll have my hair in the old Japanese way, long and tied up on top of my head. And I'll put on a good kimono and wear all the proper undergarments." In triumph, the hero yells back at her, "What does it matter to me where you go? Go wherever you like. You can take yourself to a garbage heap, or look in some crowd, for all I care, to find yourself someone who will listen to all your whining."

Ozaki was understandably piqued about Uno's friendship with the novelist Motojiro Kajii, who, despite tuberculosis, which was soon to kill him, braved the evening vapors in order to visit Uno in her Izu inn. Uno paid return visits to Kajii, it is said, by climbing up a back roof and through a window, since the proprietor of the establishment where Kajii stayed was not sympathetic to nocturnal literary gatherings.

By the time the marriage to Ozaki ended, in 1929, both parties' fictional hostilities had been amply set forth in the pages of the literary magazines. There is no agreement about exactly whose infidelities served as principal catalyst. Ozaki had found a new love, and this relationship was encouraged by his friends, who were incensed by the way Uno had treated him. Uno, now a scorned wife, was in the meantime having second thoughts out at the hot springs, and sought a reconciliation. But Ozaki, at least in his stories, stood firm against her entreaties. "Since we broke up I haven't been able to sleep," the crazed, naughty wife tells her wronged, noble husband. "I'm taking both Adapin and Calmoden. I don't know whether it's the drugs or because of my cold, but I've had a fever for two days and been in bed. My feet and hands and face are swollen like a pig's. . . . I want to return to you. I want to return."

Uno resented Ozaki's descriptions of her anguish, and swiftly took the most appropriate revenge possible. A character in one of *her* fictional works is soon muttering that her former husband is ungallantly writing things like "When I threw her out, she simply lost control of herself and went to pieces." Uno's fiction from this period crackles with pain. Her writings are raw and frankly autobiographical—just what her curious fans were eagerly waiting for. She had no compunction about revealing her delicious secrets to meet publishing deadlines. "So sensual, so provocative, was the life Uno lived and wrote about that she was soon dubbed 'a writer of illicit love,' " the American scholar Rebecca Copeland notes, in a recent issue of *Japan Quarterly*. "Although admired, she was not always taken seriously. She was a legitimate member of the *bundan* (literary world), but something of a curiosity, at times even an embarrassment."

The stories Uno wrote after parting from Ozaki make it easy to see why she gained a loyal following. She may have lived beyond the bounds of propriety, married too often, or untied the sash of her kimono for too many men, but she never lost her homey touch. Her devoted readers were women locked into traditional lives, women consumed in daily combat with their mothers-in-law, women whose only excitement was killing the rats and frogs scampering around the kitchen (the trick was to twist their necks with a dish towel), even women in the countryside who squatted for hours before their earthenware stoves tending the dinner fire. Uno brought the adventures of the metropolis to these women, but at the same time she seemed to retain the



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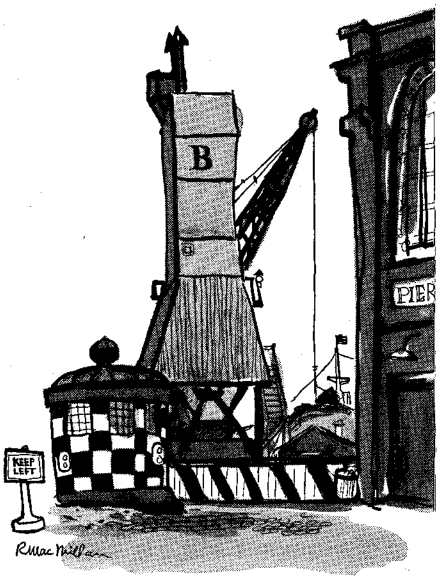
good, simple instincts of a Japanese country girl. Though a trifle wayward, she still showed respect for the old virtues. “A feeling of joy as delicate as a spider’s thread made the moment even sadder,” says one of her warm and guileless heroines in describing a meeting with her estranged husband. “I looked at him just like a young girl, smiling through my tears. ‘Look,’ I said. ‘See how long my hair has grown.’ ‘Don’t cry,’ he told me. ‘Don’t cry like that.’ ”

Alone after the separation, Uno determined to get along without the burden of a man in her life. Like many an exhausted woman before and after, she taped a list of imperatives to her wall: “Be economically independent. Be emotionally independent. Ah, independence! To stand on one’s own! Definitely don’t fall in love with anyone.” Although she wrote much during this period, she was miserable. She had not been born to undergo the rigors of being single, and, eventually, solitude proved too taxing. Before she had time to write even a paragraph about her intentions, Uno went to consult with Seiji Togo about the love-suicide scene she wanted to include in her newest work, “Why Are the Poppies Crimson?” Astonished tale-tellers were soon reporting that the two were living together in the suburbs.

IN Togo, Uno found a real soulmate, for he, perhaps more than anyone else in the entire Japanese archipelago, came trailing heartbreak, and could match her, scene for high-pitched scene, in a history of personal disaster. Togo was by 1929 a well-known, Western-style artist, who, like many of his Japanese colleagues of that time, had lived in Paris for years. His paintings are on permanent exhibition in the lavish museum of a Tokyo insurance company (the same company that recently acquired van Gogh’s “Sunflowers”). Togo, who died in 1978, is remembered for his murals, many of which adorned public buildings, and for his efforts to convey the essence of the female, writhing and white. At the start of his career, he could not decide whether to become a musician or an artist, until a mentor advised him to express the music in his soul through his painting. To the contemporary eye, his style seems to derive something from Marie Laurencin and the rest from all the Cubists who have ever lived, but he brought exotic hints of the West to Japan and became extremely popular. “The kind of colors women like,” one connoisseur recently objected.

By the time Uno met Togo, he had earned as much fame for his love life as for his Cubist rendering of “A Woman with a Parasol.” He had married before leaving for France, in 1921, but upon his return to Tokyo, seven years later, he fell in love with a tall, fair woman named Mitsuko. She was long of neck—a crucial mark of beauty for Japanese—and blessed with exquisite hands and feet. Since Mitsuko’s father, who was an admiral in the Imperial Navy, objected to his daughter’s romance with a married, unprosperous artist, Mitsuko was sent away, and Togo, without officially divorcing his first wife, consoled himself by taking a second. After a while, Mitsuko reappeared, and in March of 1929 she and Togo embarked upon the suicide attempt that kept the journalists busy for weeks. (“You have to remember how it was then,” Uno told me placidly. “No lovers attempted suicide in those days. It was a big event. The newspapers went wild. Now Japanese lovers kill themselves all the time. No one gets excited about it.”) Several weeks later, the lovers had recovered, Togo sufficiently to write an article about the episode (“Notes of a Failed Love Suicide”) for a women’s magazine. He shared his reflections with readers longing to hear the story straight from the source: “We sadly did not die together, but the absolute purity we felt on the brink of death proved that our fates would be utterly entwined from then on, and we placed great faith in this. . . . I will never stop waiting for her. She is the eternal sun for me.”



Uno’s liaison with Togo began soon thereafter, and despite the buzz of gossip they were at first extremely happy. Since both had been through tremendous upheavals, they relished the peace of their life together. Uno let her hair grow longer and, at Togo’s urging, wore Western-style dresses. Togo, the Westernized Japanese gentleman, sometimes donned kimonos. Uno stopped using makeup, and applied face oil, the way Togo liked. They danced together, and collected thin, fleet dogs, as was expected of the most exciting of Tokyo’s couples. “Maybe this is not a discreet way to talk, but I felt as if I were reading a novel and wanted to get to the next installment quickly,” she recalls in “My Literary Reminiscences.” “Togo and I were as different as night and day in our tastes, but we were alike in our ability to accept unconventional behavior easily.” The strains showed, however, after they began to build a house that was beyond their means. It was to be a residence somewhat in the manner of Le Corbusier, with atelier, salon, and fancy bedroom. Uno had to travel around selling Togo’s paintings to raise the cash this project required. But they could not meet the expenses, and were frequently harassed by creditors. “Sometimes there were notices pasted on the building announcing that our goods were being seized because we couldn’t pay the construction fees,” she writes. “In spite of this, the brilliant sun shone down upon the lawn of our big garden, and, while we did not have white cranes, our foreign breeds of dogs frolicked there. It was during this period that you could smell something criminal and shady behind this show we made of an ‘elegant’ life.”

The romance waned. Uno was left with no time for her writing, and Togo had cause to suspect that she had become intimate with some of the buyers of his paintings. He himself confesses that he was “prodigiously fickle.” It was only when they had almost finished paying for the house—a serene period Uno likens to the aftermath of a lengthy war—that she began to record Togo’s reminiscences. The tale of his great romance with Mitsuko, the admiral’s daughter, took him a year to relate, and eventually became “Confessions of Love.”

There is a splendid photograph of Uno as she was in those days, her hair sleek and pulled back, face gleaming with oil. Wearing a long chic dress fresh from Paris, she stands upon the magnificent tiled terrace just off the atelier of their estate, in Setagaya. A dachshund, a greyhound, and an English bulldog loll about in the sunshine. Few other *mo-ga* in Tokyo and its environs could boast of fashionable dogs, a Cubist lover, and silk stockings. But the days of Japan's lighthearted infatuation with Western ways were coming to a close, as grimmer times settled over the country. In "Essays on Women Writers" the literary critic Takeo Okuno explains, "The years 1933 through 1935, when 'Confessions of Love' was being written, marked the very height but simultaneously the finale of capitalism and liberalism in Japan after the First World War." Japan had already begun to occupy Manchuria, and the brutal suppression of liberal elements among the Japanese was well under way. Fanatical nationalists maneuvered for positions of greater power.

"Confessions of Love" reflects the bleakness of those days. The novel, which was first published in magazine installments, takes the form of a monologue related by one Yuasa, a well-known Western-style artist just returned from seven years in Paris. Yuasa has difficulty settling down to work, for in the course of many pages he hardly has a chance to get near the turpentine to clean his brushes. His charms overpower women wherever he happens to venture, and they will not leave him alone. On the train ride home to Tokyo, a young girl encounters him. He has kindly come into her compartment to return a fan she left in the dining car. "This is yours, isn't it?" is all he has to say to win her affections. The girl is clearly an autobiographical novelist in the making, because she is soon besieging the famous artist with notes begging for a rendezvous. When he finally deigns to meet her, she efficiently arranges a trysting spot. She loses courage at the last moment, however, and although Yuasa is willing to do her the favor of consummating their union, the lady swoons on the hotel bed. For Yuasa, feverish days ensue as he pursues this young woman, who disappears. By the time he finds her, he has shifted his interest to her friend, the beautiful Tsuyuko. Unfortunately, Tsuyuko comes from a strict Navy family, and

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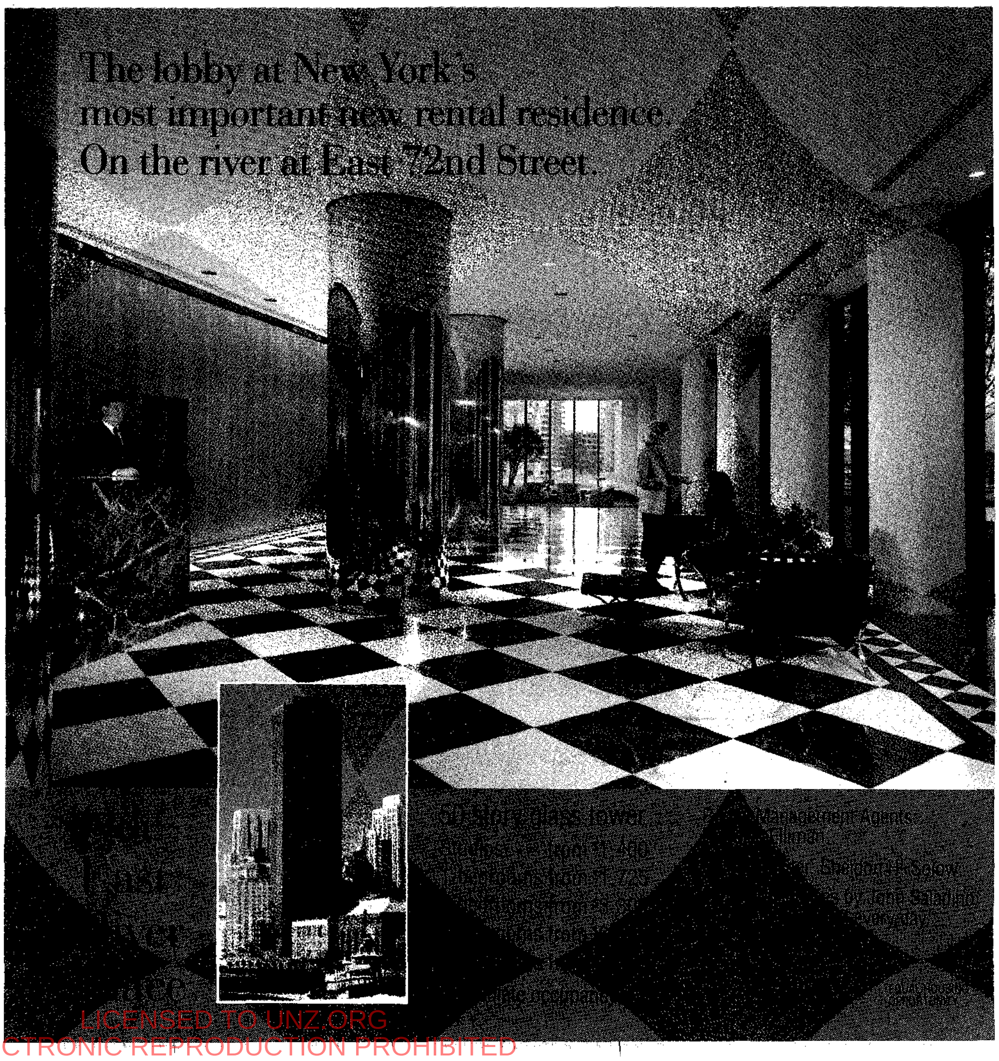

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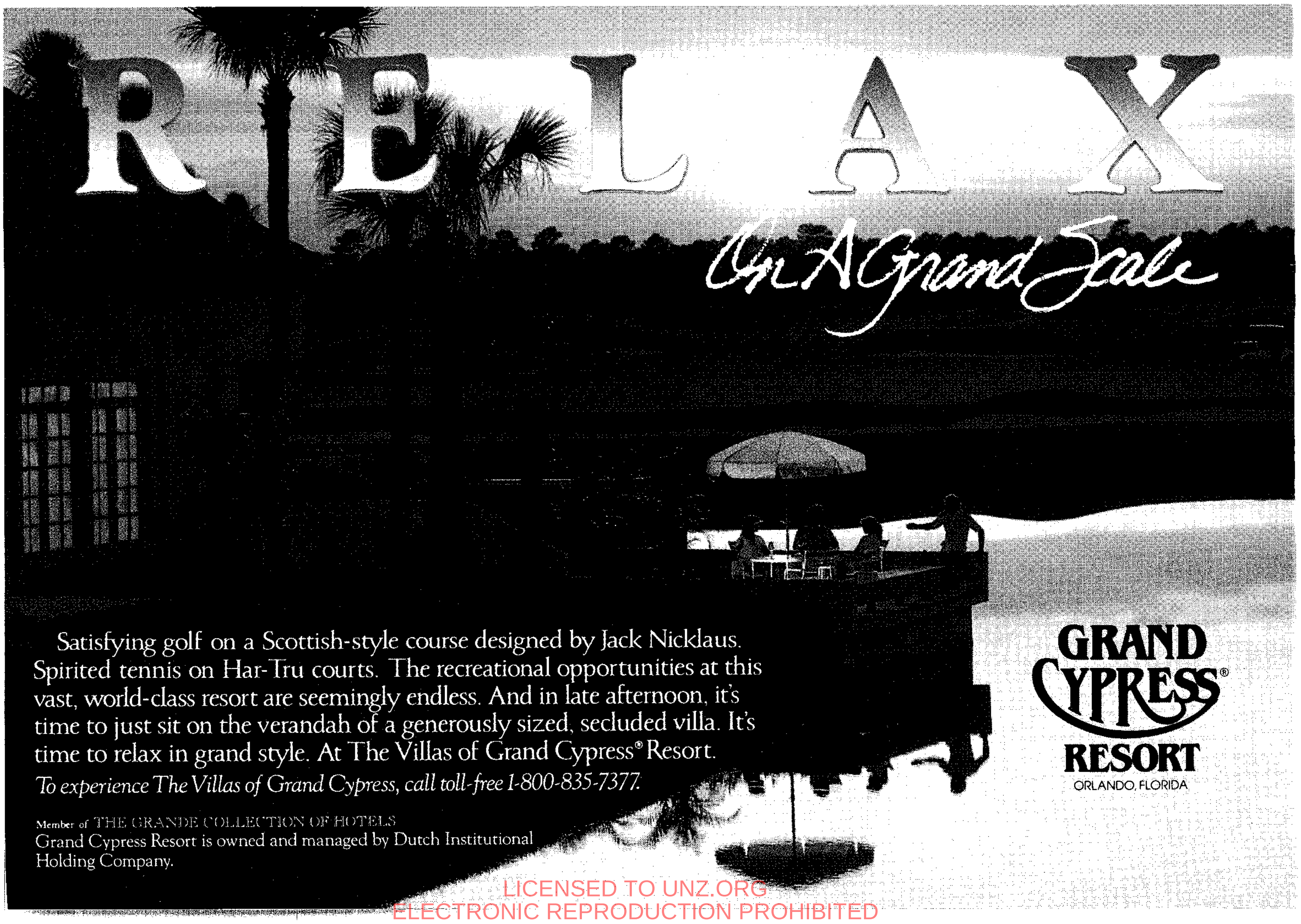
they object to her consorting with an artist who is, as it happens, short on cash, married, and a father. Tsuyuko is sent away by her parents, and Yuasa follows close behind. In the course of his obsession, there are violent rainstorms, a bout of pneumonia, and several more fainting fits. The prize continues to elude Yuasa. Tsuyuko is again shipped off by her parents, this time to places unknown, and he finds someone new to marry. The marriage is as brief as the flowering of Ueno's cherry trees in the spring, for Tsuyuko is soon back in Tokyo inviting Yuasa to die with her.

Uno claims that she didn't change one word of Togo's narrative—that she wrote down exactly what he said, only urging him on occasionally by asking what happened next. "Togo once told me, 'I think the real reason you started to live with me was so that you could write this novel.' This was not so, but I exerted myself in writing the book as if it really were so." She gives full credit for the book's success to Togo's skillful way of telling his story. She is too modest, for finally, in "Confessions of Love," her own sufferings served her well. "One of the finest love stories in modern Japanese literature," Takeo Okuno calls it.

Togo would surely have fashioned a more attractive picture of himself had he been the one to write his reminiscences. As Uno slyly presents him, the hero has a way with women, but his allure is accompanied by a terrible passivity. Weak, selfish, yet somehow irresistible, he manages to ruin the life of every woman he as much as sips a cup of *sake* with. Yuasa is a character whom Uno knew well: she had just finished wasting years of her life in thrall to men like him. In form, "Confessions of Love" is one of those autobiographical Japanese sagas in which a man relates the story of his private problems. Since honesty is essential in these stories, the male authors are obliged to reveal their basest motives, their cruellest moments. But a reader may feel that the narrator of "Confessions of Love" has flaws enough for several confessional Japanese novels. His indecisiveness, which is exceeded only by his vanity, keeps his female companions in limbo for many pages. He becomes dizzy—or faints—at critical junctures, leaving his women to their fates while they wait for him to recover. Yuasa can't even commit suicide properly. Although he has bought a medical handbook to guide him, he slashes his neck in the wrong place. His description of the suicide is especially famous for its high drama and comedy:

> The sun went down, and although we couldn't see each other's faces clearly in the faint light seeping through the curtains, Tsuyuko was apparently staring at the scalpel she held in her hand. "Maybe now's the time . . . ?" I said, and just at that moment what seemed like a burst of hot water came fountaining out, soaking through my thin shirt. Tsuyuko had cut her throat first, and I could see the blood gushing from the wound as I called out to her. Thoroughly agitated, I gathered up her limp body and laid her down on the bed. I had wanted to remain calm, but a frenzy shook through me. "I can't die in a shirt that's soiled like this," I told myself in all seriousness. I got out of bed and took a fresh shirt from the bureau, removing the shirt that had been drenched in Tsuyuko's blood. I was so flustered that I didn't stop to think that if I was going to do the same to myself, the new shirt would become even more bloody. I carefully fastened the buttons and rushed to Tsuyuko's side, where I took up the other scalpel. My heart was pumping hard from the whiskey we had drunk earlier, and when I brought



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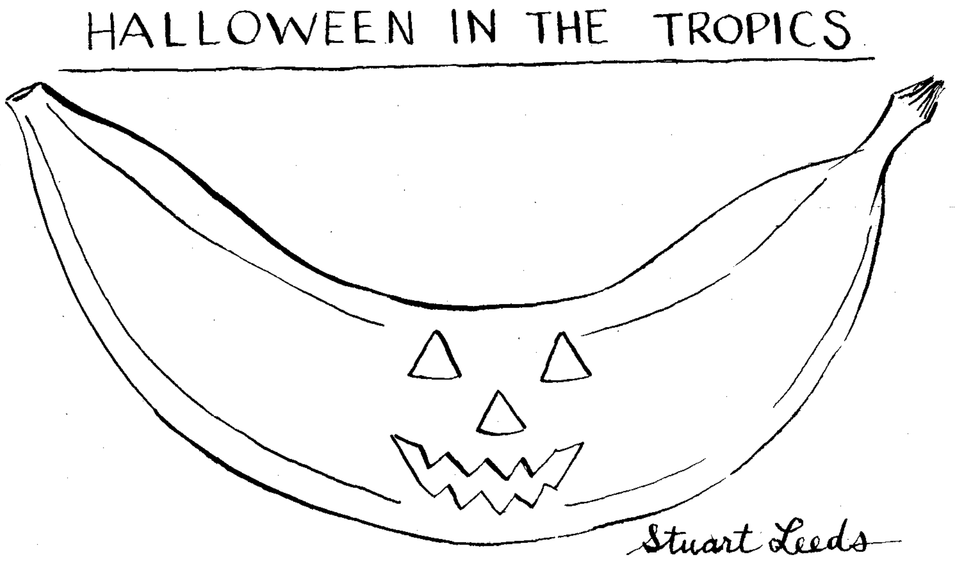


> my hand to my throat I could feel the prominence of a large blood vessel pulsing with the heavy flow. I pressed the blood vessel with one hand and, praying that my strength would not fail me, pierced my throat with a single hard thrust.

Uno had already rented separate quarters for herself by the time "Confessions of Love" was published in book form, in April of 1935. She was astounded when she learned that Togo had returned to Mitsuko. Upon hearing this news, Uno confesses, she went temporarily berserk and for the first time in her life felt real hatred. But her equanimity was soon restored. By early summer, she possessed enough serenity to write the story "Parting Is Also a Pleasure," in which the heroine's former artist lover drops by for a friendly visit. Unappreciated still, he complains that he just can't communicate with his new companion: "I don't know what she's feeling, and she really doesn't understand me." Our heroine smiles and utters a few sage words about everyone's essential isolation.

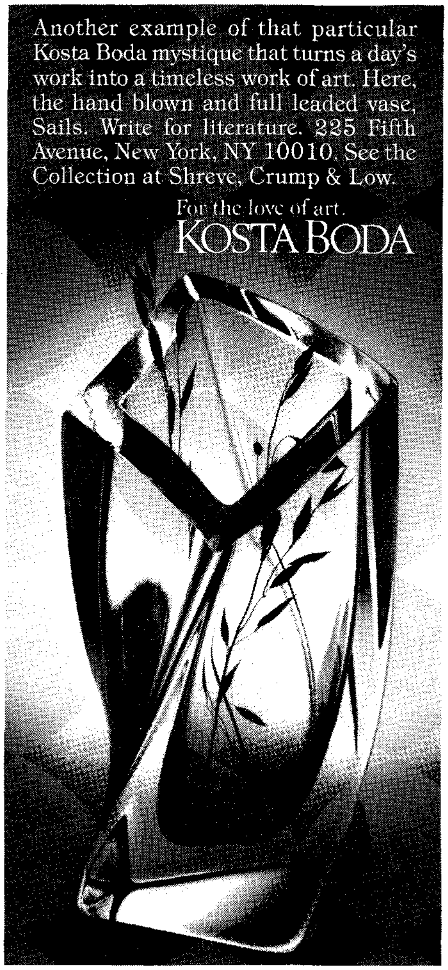
In several of her reminiscences, Uno expresses gratitude to Togo for those years and for his painterly instruction in color combinations—a knowledge she would later put to use in her kimono business. ("He was a very fine person," she said to me.) Until Togo, Uno had been known chiefly as an accurate chronicler of her own eventful life. She had only to live dangerously, and survive to set down the details. But works like "Confessions of Love" got her beyond her life story at last. "Speaking through a man's voice gave me a real sense of freedom," she says.

Somewhat at loose ends after the breakup with Togo, Uno leapt at the suggestion that she try her hand at publishing a magazine for women. In 1936, she started Japan's first fashion magazine, *Sutairu* (the Japanese pronunciation of "style"). She also found time to cultivate an attachment to Takeo Kitahara, a dapper novelist and critic ten years her junior. He was warned about keeping company with such a dangerous woman. Uno's friends, for their part, suspected that she had taken leave of her senses when the wedding was announced. Some of the literary luminaries who received invitations to the April 1, 1939, gala could not believe that she intended to marry again; they suspected an April Fools' joke. (The skeptics on Kitahara's side had reason to fret, for his professional reputation was eventually diminished by the glitter surrounding this union.) With Kitahara in tow, Uno focussed her energies upon making a success of *Sutairu*. The magazine featured full-page photographs of actresses and geishas, in smart layouts new to Japan. Kitahara thought up chatty surveys. ("What do you do at night when you can't sleep?")

Kitahara, who had been devoted to French literature from an early age, was not universally admired; detractors came to see him as pretentious. His personal vanity became the butt of jokes, and to this day (he died in 1973) Japanese editors delight in recounting a rumor about how he used to spread black shoe polish on his head when he started to go bald and the problems he had when caught in the rain. The charge of affectation dogged his fiction as well. Yasunari Kawabata, commenting brutally on the novella "Wife" (1938), found its mixture of influences confusing—"much like being served sashimi with mayonnaise on top." Others have justifiably risen to defend the work (one critic has called Kawabata's remark "slanderous"), for Kitahara's story of a dying wife and her imperfect husband beautifully evokes a sense of life's emptiness and, in the grand manner of Japanese literature, gathers power from griefs that are never fully expressed.

Shortly after the war began, Kitahara was conscripted and sent to Java to write for the Military Information Corps. He returned in 1943, and the following year he and Uno left the dangers of Tokyo for a comfortable stay in yet another hot-springs resort on the Izu Peninsula. Uno prided herself on her ability to acquire white rice, chicken, yellowtail, and other hard-to-find items for the household. When the war grew fiercer, they were forced to evacuate again—this time to his family home, in Tochigi Prefecture. There she traded her clothes for honey and other supplies. Sometimes the attacking American planes flew so low that Uno could see the faces of the pilots. In August, 1945, the family gathered around the radio to hear the Emperor's broadcast announcing Japan's surrender.

Never prolific, Uno wrote little in those chaotic times, but while the war was still on she fell under the spell of a Bunraku puppet that belonged to her publisher, and went off to Shikoku, in the countryside, to interview the dedicated craftsman who had carved its superb face. "The Puppet-Maker Kyukichi Tenguya," published in 1942, is another record of a man's reminiscences—this time those of an eighty-six-year-old master who had spent every day since his sixteenth year seated on his tatami floor quietly carving puppet heads for the Bunraku plays. "Art is a person's whole life," Tenguya explains in a humble endorsement of his own single-mindedness. "If you start feeling that you have achieved enough, that is the end for you. . . . While you are alive you must think in various ways and put your mind to seeing how you can improve your work." Uno says that Tenguya's example inspired her to return to her neglected writing. She spent a total of ten years



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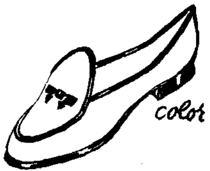

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working on "Ohan." The novella's narrator, Kanoya, who must rank as one of the most irresolute heroes in world literature, is racked by love for his self-sacrificing, saintly wife, Ohan. He deserted her years before for Okayo, a savvy and brash geisha bent on keeping her man. Which woman should he choose? Related in Kanoya's colorful dialect (there is an English translation by Donald Keene), the lovers' conflicts and the atmosphere owe much to the old Bunraku plays, but the tart view of human psychology is unmistakably that of the postwar period. Rickshaws transport visitors to their destinations in the geisha quarter, and the clattering wooden clogs along Kajiya Street distract Kanoya's already disorderly thought processes. The cherry-blossom petals flutter down upon the geisha's gaudy robes, Kanoya procrastinates further, and Uno happily dissects another fainthearted hero.

Publication of *Sutairu* was resumed after the Japanese defeat, when Tokyo was in ruins and food scarce. This slick magazine tantalized the stricken country by promising better days to come, and when the first issue appeared (with a sophisticated cover by a Japanese artist returned from Paris) the line of customers twice circled the building housing the magazine's offices. Because of the riches from *Sutairu*, Uno could dance in Ginza, while many other Japanese faced starvation in bombed-out hovels. She built a palace for her entourage on choice Tokyo real estate. The cash flowed in and out—"like water," she has said—and the magazine was not always careful to pay its taxes. Finally, an envious publishing colleague wrote an anonymous note to the tax office about these irregularities. Uno and Kitahara were ruined. They had to borrow to pay the taxes, and she used income from her recently founded kimono enterprise to stave off the loan sharks. They published a serious literary magazine between fiscal emergencies. For many years, they worked desperately to pay off huge debts. It was a shared burden, which would keep them married until 1964, but they had drifted apart long before; by then, Kitahara was involved with another woman.

THE passing years had left Uno battered but still on her feet, and it is not surprising that she found new applications for her life experiences. She began to see prudent patterns in her own youthful unruliness, and she became old enough to sound wise. Uno was a natural for the role of agony columnist. The titles of several of her later works place her solidly within the ranks of the Japanese self-help experts. In "I Am Always Busy," "A Woman Can Get Married at Any Age," and "Living in Search of Happiness," among others, she comes out in favor of a Japanese mixture of spiritual fortitude, useful activity, and finicky eating habits. Taking a grandmotherly "I have been there, Setsuko!" approach, she has at times advocated woefully conservative positions in her advice to the lovelorn. She urges blind loyalty to husbands and—lowest of blows—has also written on behalf of *gaman*, the ancient Japanese female virtue of "forbearance." In sections of "My Guide to Marriage," however, she does stand up for contemporary social mores. She includes the following admonition in her Ten Commandments for Avoiding Divorce: "When a wife discovers her husband's first infidelity, she must become insanely jealous. She must not even dream of telling him 'Dear, you have my permission.' " The seething, wordless stare—a variant of *gaman*—simply does not suffice to get the point across: "First, cry as loud as you can, then make a great show of screaming, 'I can't stand it! I can't! I just can't!' Don't think about what you look like. At that point, start heaving whatever is handy all over the place, or just start clawing at his face." In a mellower mood, she has shared her recipes with readers, reminding them to use only the very best *sake* lees for pickling vegetables.

Uno has travelled abroad several times, and was once photographed wearing Japanese finery in front of the Eiffel Tower. In 1957, she took her kimonos to Seattle, where Americans modelled her designs. Later on, she wrote "To Sting" (1966), a fictionalized account of the melancholy end of her marriage to Kitahara. She also followed the activities of another errant male in "The Sound of the Wind" (1969), but this time let the patient wife serve as the narrator of his dreadful exploits. Her writings have won many literary prizes. In November, 1985, at an Imperial Hotel celebration of her eighty-eighth birthday, she emphasized her refusal to fade into demure old age by appearing in a *furisode*, the long-sleeved kimono reserved for young unmarried girls.

There are those who say that Chiyo Uno has gone too far in keeping her wild reputation alive. Japanese reporters have been only too eager to take advantage of her willingness to discuss the details of her love life in public. Even her fondest admirers cannot help wincing at the sight of a hard-of-hearing, heavily made-up ninety-year-old author responding to questions on television about whether there are any new boyfriends on the horizon, or airily describing one of her Buddhist statues as the spitting image of the late Kitahara, for whom it has been nicknamed. At such times, a Western observer might imagine that this is what Mae West would have been like if she had worn kimonos and gone on a tofu diet.

But Japan can be hard on women, and too many women writers seem to conclude their tales with the heroine staring moodily out into an unchanging landscape. They make a convincing case for a constricted world, where lakes are silent, the black pines still. It is thus cheering to read a story like Uno's "Happiness," written in 1970, when she was seventy-three. The elderly heroine has built a house on a snowy mountainside and lives there alone. Her assorted husbands have sought solace elsewhere, the heater isn't working, the cold seeps through the cracks, yet she remains unperturbed. She even considers herself blessed by her bad eyesight: when she looks in the mirror after her bath, she is pleased to see a beauty like Botticelli's Venus. "In this manner," Uno writes, "she collects fragments of happiness, one after another, and so lives, spreading them throughout her environment." The old woman refuses to think about whether her water pipes have frozen, and instead imagines herself skiing down the snowy slopes. As she studies the blizzard swirling outside her window, she offers hope to those not as pretty or as plucky as herself: "The snowflakes dance toward the sky, and the sun still shines. The winds have risen."

—PHYLLIS BIRNBAUM

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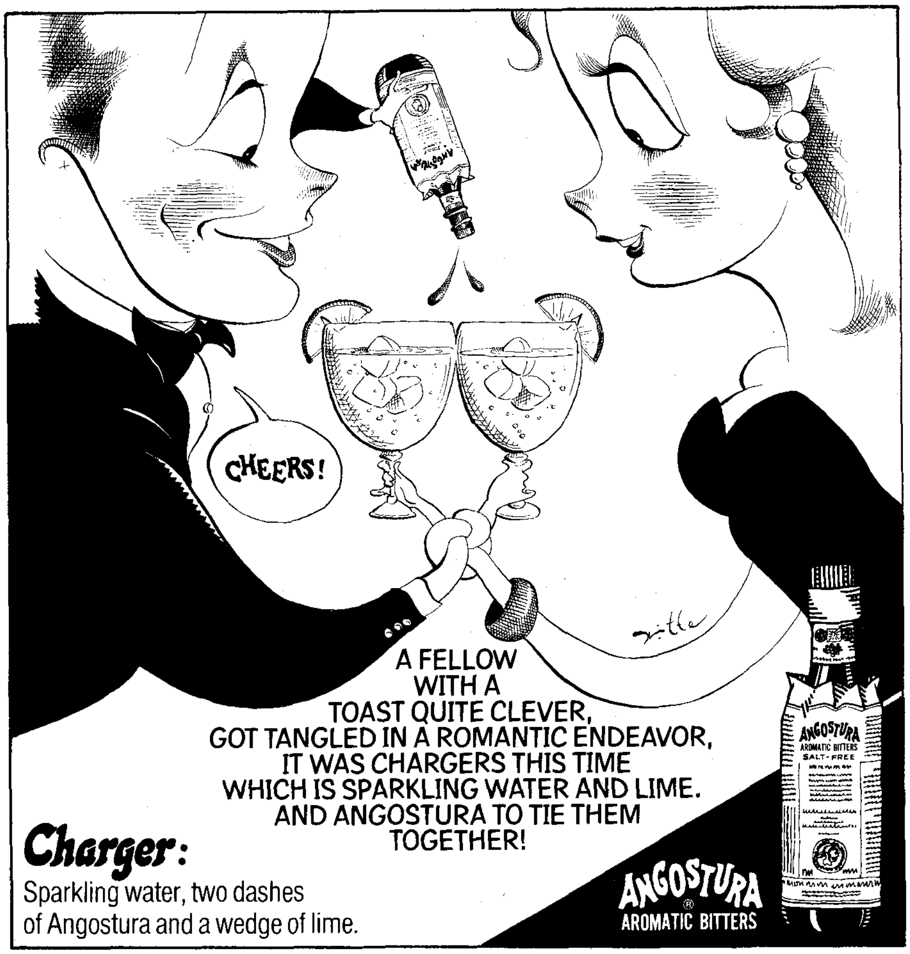
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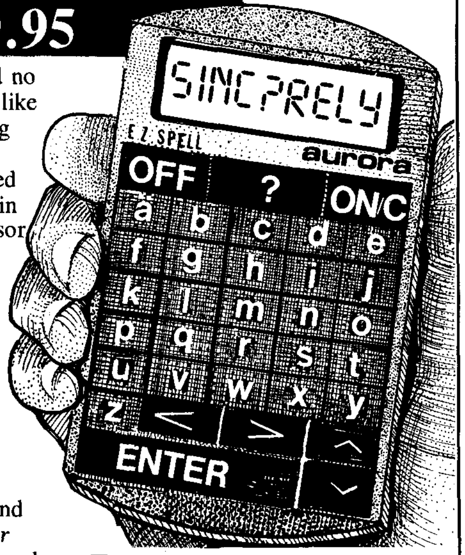

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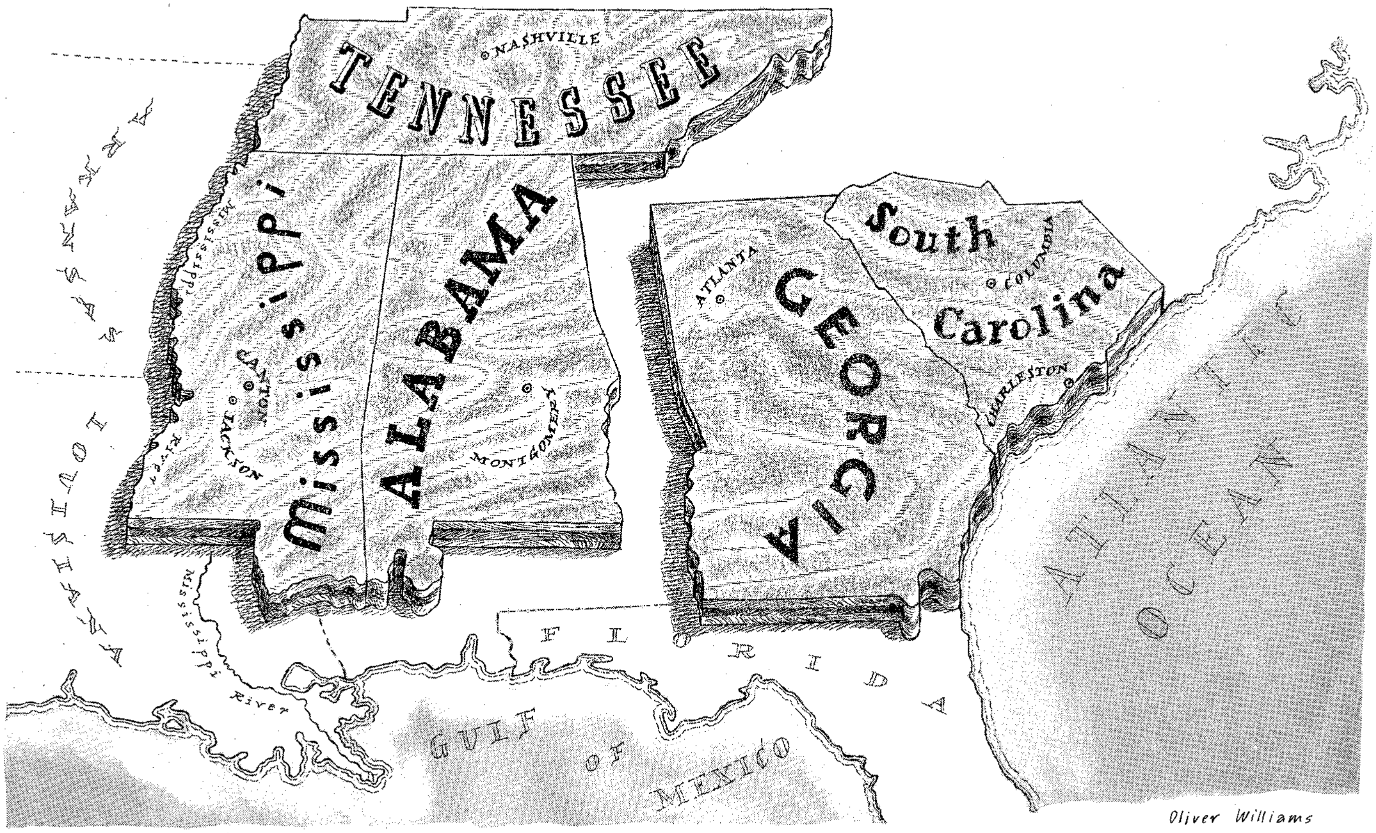
THE RELIGION OF THE PAST

II—SOMETHING WE ALL LIVE WITH



Oliver Williams

THE air-conditioning system of the Ramada Renaissance Hotel in Jackson, Mississippi, was silent; the tinted glass of my window shut out traffic noise as well as glare. All around were great highways. To the east, the city was green, trees hiding better-off housing developments. To the northeast was a big new shopping area. Pleasing views: hardly the poverty I had heard about in connection with Mississippi.

But, of course, there was another side to Jackson—there, in its very center. And on Sunday afternoon, as I rode with an acquaintance through the streets without business traffic, it was easy to see. The inner city was black. There were streets of "shotgun" houses. It was the first time I had ever heard the expressive word: narrow wooden houses (like mobile homes or old-fashioned railway carriages) with the front room opening into the back room and with the front door and the back door aligned. On Sunday afternoon, the people were out on the streets, so the effect of crowd and slum was immediate: as though outdoor life, life outside the houses, were an aspect of poverty.

At a street corner, on an open lot, in the hot midafternoon sun, there was a black prayer meeting. It had no audience. Everyone there was a performer. The women were dressed for Sunday, and the men were in suits and ties, except for the pastor, who was in a long white robe. This was the West Jackson Crusade of the St. Paul Church of God in Christ. It was an occasion of music and dance. Many of the people in that dressed-up group were having the chance to go up to the pulpit or to hold the microphone and sing.

The songs seemed to be variations on a single line. "What would I do without Jesus?" That was all that a middle-aged man in a brown suit was singing, leaning on the pulpit and bending over the microphone in a confiding manner, as though he had a large audience instead of none at all (save the people in our car). What would that man have done for a living? What would have been his true—or his other—occupation?

The leader of the choir was a big young woman in a white dress. She stood a little way in front of the choir. She was distinguished from them by the plain white of her dress, by her size, and by her voice. When her turn came to use the microphone, she didn't go to the pulpit. She took the microphone on its cord and sang from where she stood. "Don't let nobody turn you round!" That was her line, and the variations on it seemed to come naturally:

Don't let—
Don't let nobody—
Don't let nobody turn you round!

And the group danced. Among the dancers were three small boys. One of them stood in front. He was very small, perhaps five or six, and he was in long trousers, with suspenders. The two other boys, at the back, were bigger, and the dancing—all the intricate and inventive things they did with their legs—seemed to come to them in fits. At one moment, they were like children at a grownup occasion, indifferent and far away. And then, suddenly, they were possessed. The dance rippled through them. And then, just as suddenly, they came to the end of their dancing, even while the singing was going on, in the middle of a line of the song of the woman in white, and they returned to what they had been doing. The pastor, in his long white robe, danced while the woman sang, the disturbance of his robe creating its own rhythm.

When she had done with her singing, the young woman in white came across to where our car was. She was perspiring at the top of her forehead from her dancing in the afternoon heat, the heat intensified here by its reflection from the streets and buildings. She asked, honey-voiced, whether we were witnessing the service, and she gave us a tract.

In the tract was a photograph of the pastor, not in his white robe and with his cross, not in a pose suggesting the rhythm of his dance, but in a jacket and tie, and studious, looking past the photographer. He was the Elder Jesse Kelly. In addition to being pastor of his church, he was "founder of the West Jackson Crusade, local announcer of WOAD, graduate of JSU," and "presently working towards a Masters of Divinity at Wesley Biblical Seminary." His religious call (according to the tract) included a Sunday school, a night-club ministry, a radio ministry, a street ministry, and tent services.

The music and the singing held us; the dancing held us; we could marvel at the religious dedication. But we could only be witnesses; we couldn't participate.

At the side of my grandmother's house, in central Trinidad, there was a tall gate, of corrugated iron on a plank frame. This was the main entrance to the house and yard. One of my earliest ideas—when I was six or seven—was that there were two worlds: the world within, the world without. To go out of that gate was to be in a world quite different from the world in the house; to go in through that gate at the end of the school day was to shed the ideas of the world outside. Everyone lives with ideas like these; everyone has different sets of behavior. But in a racially mixed society, especially one where race is a big issue, the different worlds can take on racial overtones. Distinctions and differences can have the force of taboos—things sensed rather than consciously worked out. In such a society, participation is different from witnessing; they engage different sides of the person.

And it was with old relief, a revival on the Jackson street of old, half-buried community feelings from my childhood in Trinidad, that I put an end to my pleasure in the singing and dancing of the West Jackson Crusade, and returned to the silent healing of the air-conditioned room of the Ramada Renaissance, in the north of the city.

SEVERAL people in Jackson mentioned the unusual constitution of the State of Mississippi—the constitution drafted in 1890, after the Civil War and Reconstruction. I had heard that this constitution was responsible for a good deal of what one saw still, and I went to talk to former Governor William Winter about it. He had a high reputation in the state, both as a governor and as a man knowledgeable about the state's history.

Mr. Winter saw me in his office late one afternoon, at the end of a busy day; that morning, he had flown to Little Rock, Arkansas. The former governor was now a partner in a Jackson law firm. He spoke precisely and legalistically; he had books and a map ready, and all the time we spoke he was looking up references in books.

On a wall of his office, along with a family photograph, was a large old map of the state. When he went to get me a cold drink, I got up and looked at it. It was linen-mounted and framed, and had been a gift to Mr. Winter. It was a French map—from 1830, perhaps. With the exception of Monroe County in the northeastern part of the state, it showed only the southern counties of the state as settled. A large central area had been marked out for further settlement. Though this area was almost as large as all the settled counties put together, on the map it was just called Hinds County. The areas to the east and north of the settled portions were still, in 1830, Indian country: Choctaws and Chickasaws.

Half the state Indian country in 1830 or thereabouts; in 1860, the Civil War about to come; in 1890, after the Civil War and Reconstruction, a new constitution. History here seemed to come in thirty-year segments. Add the yellow-fever epidemics of 1853, 1878, 1898, and 1905; add the Great Depression. There was nothing settled, stable.

Mr. Winter said, "The atmosphere in which the 1890 constitution was

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written was dominated by the need for whites to provide a means for the restoration of white control of the political processes of the state. The constitution of 1869 did not afford a vehicle for the elimination of black voters and black officeholders. There were some black officeholders when the 1890 constitution was written." During Reconstruction, there had been two black senators, a black lieutenant governor, a black secretary of state, and a black superintendent of education, among others; and even after Reconstruction there had been two black congressmen. "The 1890 constitution of Mississippi became a model for other Southern states—in its resourceful provisions for the discouragement of black voting."

Almost as important as the racial provisions were the anti-business provisions. The people who wrote the constitution wanted the state to remain "a pastoral state, an agricultural state." They didn't want big business or the corporations coming in, encouraging "unfavorable competition for jobs with the agricultural community."

"We threw various roadblocks in the path of corporate development," Mr. Winter said. "It had the effect of discouraging investment in industrial plants in the state. Around 1905, the Great Southern Lumber Company desired to locate a sawmill in Pearl River, Mississippi. Because of the constitutional limitations here, that mill located across the river in Louisiana, almost within sight of Pearl River County, and virtually created a new town in Louisiana—Bogalusa. There was a limit in Mississippi on the amount of property a corporation could own, a limit on the capital structure of a corporation. Even in 1890, that constitution singled us out as being noncompetitive for capital. There is an archaic tone to the whole document. We need the psychological benefit now of a late-twentieth-century document. And, the second thing, we need the restructuring of the manner in which we govern the state. We have to eliminate many of the processes designed to decentralize and fragment power. In 1890, there was a distrust of any concentration of power in any one individual. With the result that there's not a single law that's passed by the Mississippi Legislature that is in strict accordance with the constitution of 1890."

"What sort of men were they in 1890?"

"They represented the ultraconservative planter agricultural interests. Some of them were veterans of the Civil War. A strong racial bias ran through the membership. They were committed to eliminating the black presence in the political process."

"Do you think there was anything like a romantic feeling for the land?"

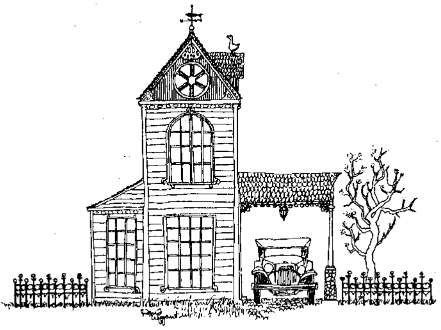
"It was a feeling for the land of the landowner, not the worker. The yeoman farmer was not the dominant feature of the convention. The constitution spoke to the economic interests of those who drafted it. For instance, it spoke at length of the maintenance of a levee system along the Mississippi River—which really has no place in a constitution. You can see the preoccupation of the drafters, who reflected the interests of the Delta planters."

There might have been no romantic feeling for the land, but how did Mr. Winter explain the anti-government tone of the constitution?

"It reflected the basic frontier aspect of the state," he said. "They were saying, 'We're going to use government to solve those problems that appear to us important, but we're not going to use government to interfere with our lives.' As it was used, the constitution worked against the powerless in the state. But that is no longer a valid objection. Corrections have been made."

And the constitution had left its mark. "The Carolinas and Georgia had tobacco-processing plants and textile plants. Alabama has a well-established industrial base, going back to the nineteenth century. Mississippi never developed that kind of base."

On the former governor's desk was a map of the United States showing, for 1984, the "economically competitive" counties and the "distressed" counties. The competitive counties were colored blue; the distressed counties were colored pink. The map showed four concentrated areas of distressed counties: on the Mexican border; in the Indian areas in the West; Appalachia; and the lower Mississippi Valley, making almost one pink area of large portions of Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, and Mississippi. Only the area around Jackson was colored blue.



IT was my wish, in Mississippi, to consider things from the white point of view as far as that was possible for me—from Trinidad, of Asian origin, descended from late-nineteenth-century immigrants brought over from India to work the land after the abolition of slavery. Someone in New York had told me that I wouldn't find it easy. I would find people closed, unable or unwilling to say more than they thought they should. And, indeed, how quickly I appeared to get to the limit of Ellen's ideas and memories! She was sixty, of a good family. She had liberal attitudes, and it seemed hard for her to go beyond a statement of those attitudes.

She said, "I feel we've been through a revolution in Mississippi since the nineteen-sixties. It was like two separate societies here. Now black people have much better jobs than they had. Instead of everybody having to work in a home—I'm talking about women—now they're working in McDonald's or a bank or a store."

And there we stayed for some time. Ellen—perhaps because I wasn't being acute enough, or because I hadn't yet learned how to talk to Mississippi people—did not appear to say more than that. I even put away my notebook. She was gentle, welcoming, eager to talk. We got finally to talking about her childhood. And that was when I took my notebook out again.

"I grew up in the Depression. But I didn't feel bad about myself. Everybody else was poor, too. The reason I didn't feel bad was that I had a lot of aunts and uncles and cousins, and all—a large extended family, but I didn't know you called it that. They loved me and had time for me. I would go out and spend summers with them. They always had time to talk to you and fix your favorite foods. They even made me dresses. I had an aunt who read a lot to me. She had a lot of books. Actually, she was the postmistress. She encouraged me to be my best self. I guess this sounds snobbish, but she would say, 'Ellen, dear, there are some things we just don't do.' There were

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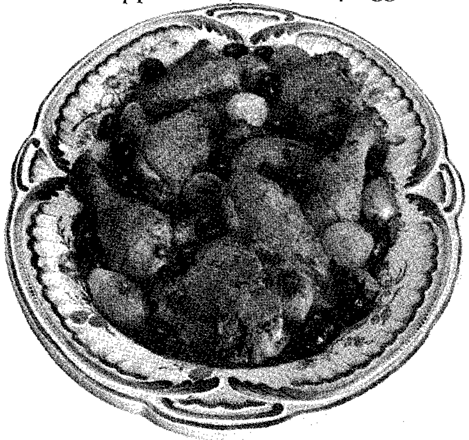

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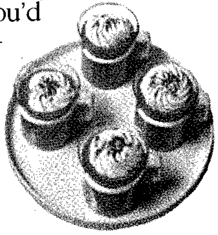

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some *people* we just didn't go around with."

That idea of a small community where people were related and everyone knew everyone else—I had found that for many people it was part of the beauty of the ways of the past.

I asked Ellen, "Where did those uncles and aunts live?"

"They lived in the most conservative town in Mississippi."

She returned to the topic of the love she had experienced in her childhood, the love that had partly made her. "It helped me to have a positive self-image —though that wasn't the way we talked about it then. I think people here still have scars from the Depression. It seemed to me like it was very bad here. There just weren't any jobs. My sister was older than I, and she suffered more than I, but that was because she had had more to begin with. She had things that were lost. I just grew up poor.

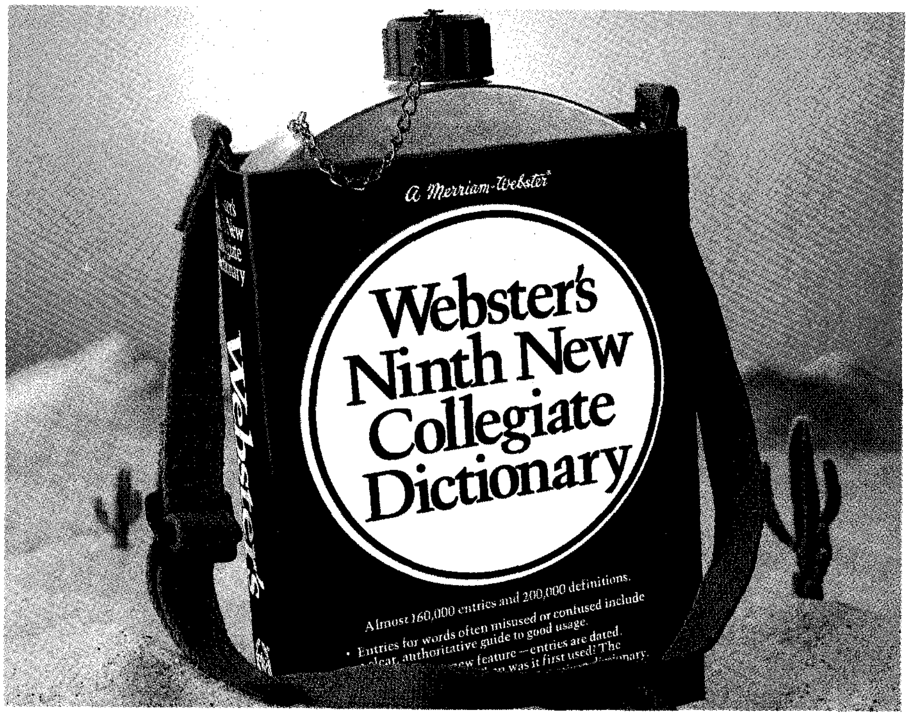
"I became more proud of being a Southerner when I got away from the South. My husband went to school in the East, and I worked. This was after World War II. At the time, we had a politician, a senator called Bilbo. Bilbo was a racist, and during the Depression he had advocated sending all the blacks back to Africa as a solution to the unemployment problem. And he was absolutely admired by the people of Mississippi, I guess. But he was absolutely hated by the people I worked with in Massachusetts. This was a psychology group I worked with. They were doing research in group dynamics—prejudice, and so forth.

"That was when I began to look for things that were positive about the South and Mississippi. I thought about the people. And I thought about the hardships we had been through—and you can't expect people to act perfect when you think of all the things they've gone through. The people in Massachusetts, in 1946—they could act surprised that someone from Mississippi could read and write and we wore shoes. It's still true in some places. People have a very, very bad impression of Mississippi. But it's changing."

"Is it because of the writers?"

"The writing grew out of the dirt and this love of talk, talk."

And, going back to her time in Massachusetts, Ellen said, "The people I worked with—they wanted to know if I would really do this. There was a



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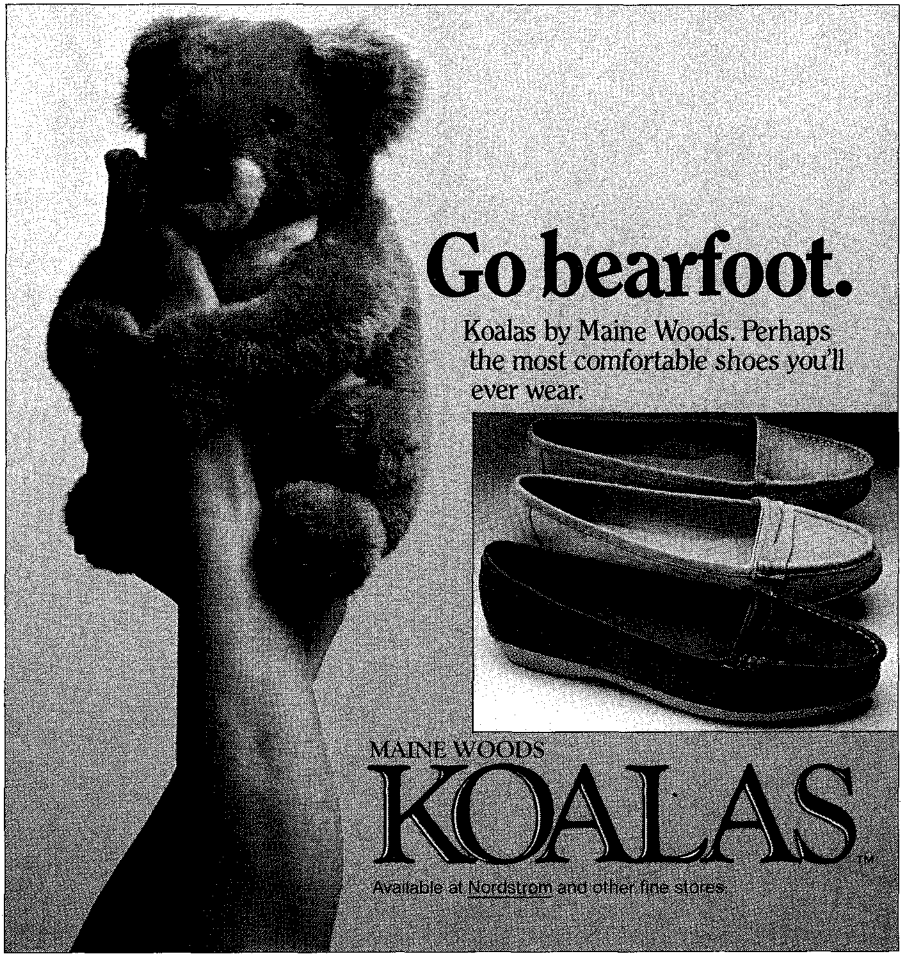

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black man visiting, and guess who they got to show him around. Well, I showed him around. He was a lovely person. I learned from him. I think they were surprised. They never did say it. I never gave them the opportunity. Do you see how far we've come?"

But there was Mississippi's reputation for violence. Was there really such a thing as a "redneck mentality"?

There was. She acted it out: "Don't mess with me." She raised her slender arms in a boxing pose. "The rednecks to the south of the town were just mean. They had the reputation. They were very pugilistic. There were stories about them. Like if a travelling salesman came through they would hitch him to the plow and have him plow all night. I don't know if that was fact or fiction. They would get drunk on Saturday night and fight each other and kill each other off. That's really the worst part of Mississippi. It just had a bad reputation. But out of that group there grew some fine, outstanding Mississippians, including some fine clergymen. It shows that there's hope, doesn't it?"

And there was also the racial issue, never to be forgotten in Mississippi and the South.

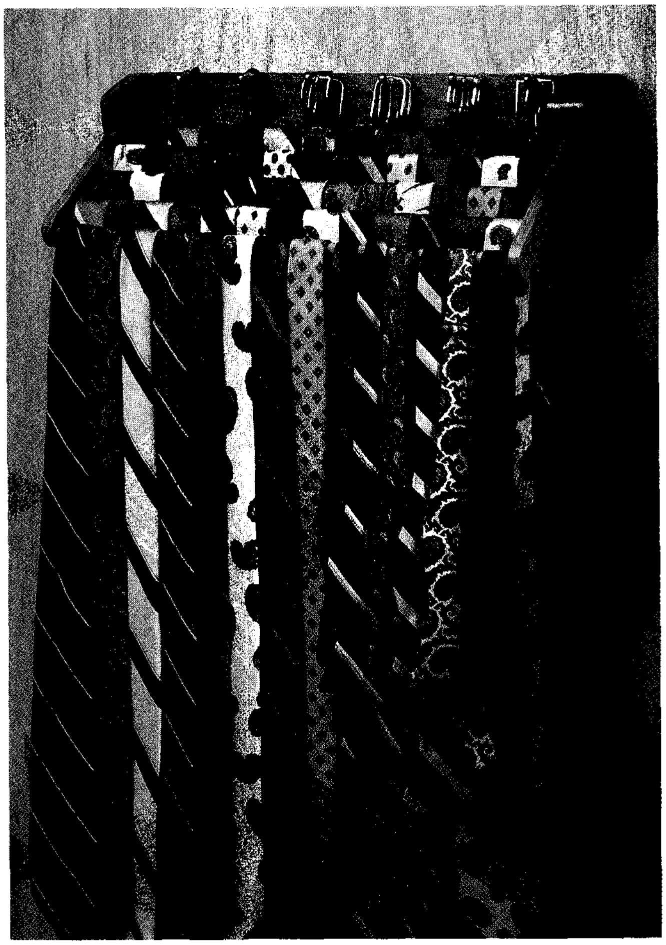
"I played with my cousins, and we played with black children, too. They were the children of the servants—the washerwomen, and so on. That's why I think Southerners have a better feeling about black people than the Northerners. We called them Negroes—'black' is a new word. I've gotten used to it. We didn't use 'nigger' in my house." I didn't ask Ellen about the words, or prompt her; what she said came out naturally. "My relatives didn't call people niggers, either. I guess they had a little more civility than that—even though they lived out in the country."

For the third or fourth time, Ellen said, "I grew up in a loving environment."

A memory came to her: she had been breaking off to say that our talk had begun to make her put things together, call up old things. "My daddy liked to fish. He took me fishing. I don't think I have as harsh attitudes"—she meant racial attitudes—"as some people, because of that." She broke off again, and smiled. "My summers in the country are important, aren't they?"

"How many summers?"

"It's more like the first twelve years



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of my life. I know I feel differently from some other people, but I just don't know why."

"Religion?"

"I do think my religion makes a difference, and the feeling that we are all made in God's image. Probably not as a child. I'd have to have more understanding to think that." Then she said, "And these stories about people doing mean things."

Mean things, in a loving childhood?

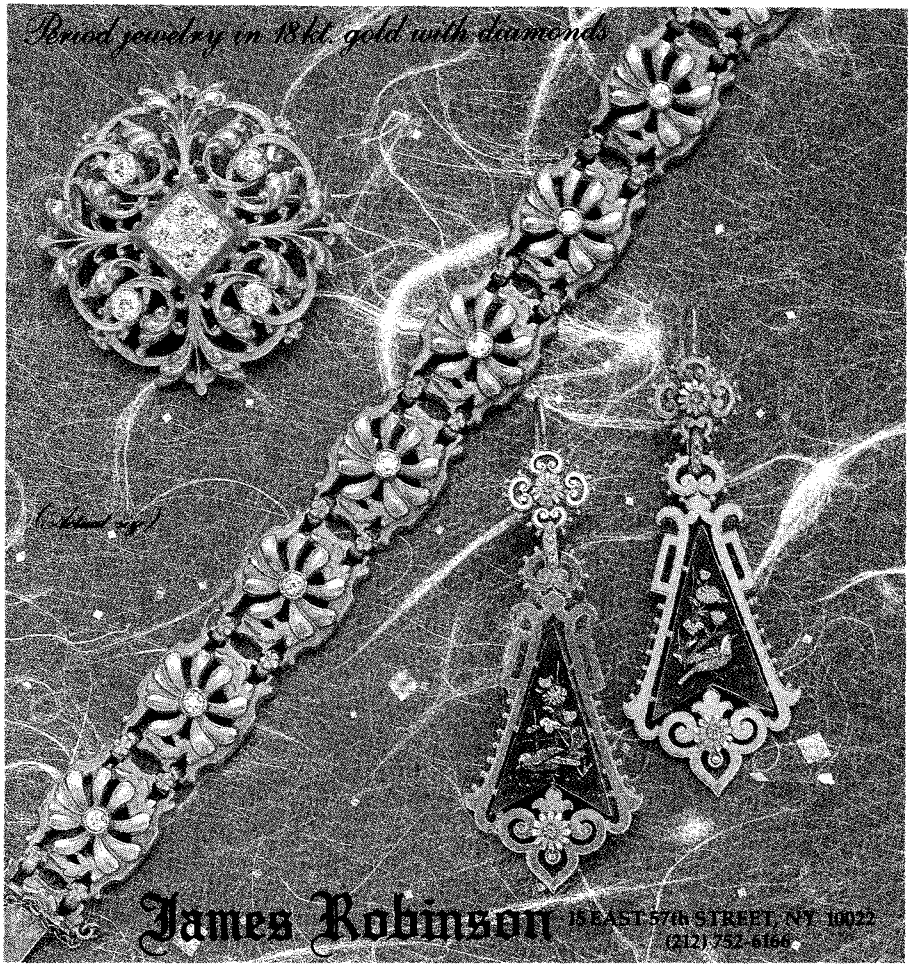
Ellen said (memory working, unrelated pieces of the past fitting together, as she said they had begun to do while she talked), "My mother told me about hiding her maid from the Ku Klux Klan. It shows just how far we've progressed. My mother had a maid. And the Ku Klux Klan was trying to get her. I don't know why. My mother didn't talk very much about it. I think the Klan wanted to give the maid a good beating and send her away, for some reason. My mother said she hid her in a laundry basket in her house to protect her. Of course, they wouldn't come into my mother's house. This was really before I was born. They—the Klan—they were probably young men. O.K. people in the town."

"Didn't this frighten you?"

"I don't think it frightened me. It gave me a great sense of disgust for something like the Klan." She added, "The rednecks—that story I told you, it probably happened before I was born."

And I understood what Ellen was saying better than I said. No situation or circumstance is absolutely like any other, but in the Indian countryside of my childhood in Trinidad there were many murders and acts of violence, and these acts of violence gave the Trinidad Indians, already separated from the rest of the island by language, religion, and culture, a fearful reputation. But to us, to whom the stories of murders and feuds were closer, other things were at stake. The family feuds or the village feuds often had to do with an idea of honor. Perhaps it was a peasant idea; perhaps this idea of honor is especially important to a society without recourse to law or without confidence in law.

Imagine this scene in a Trinidad Indian village of the nineteen-twenties or thirties. A village big man, say, is murdered. The next morning, after the legal formalities, the body is displayed in a coffin, which is perhaps set out on



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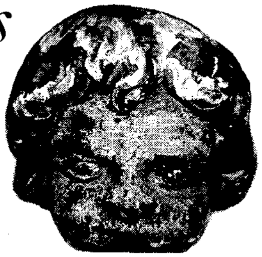
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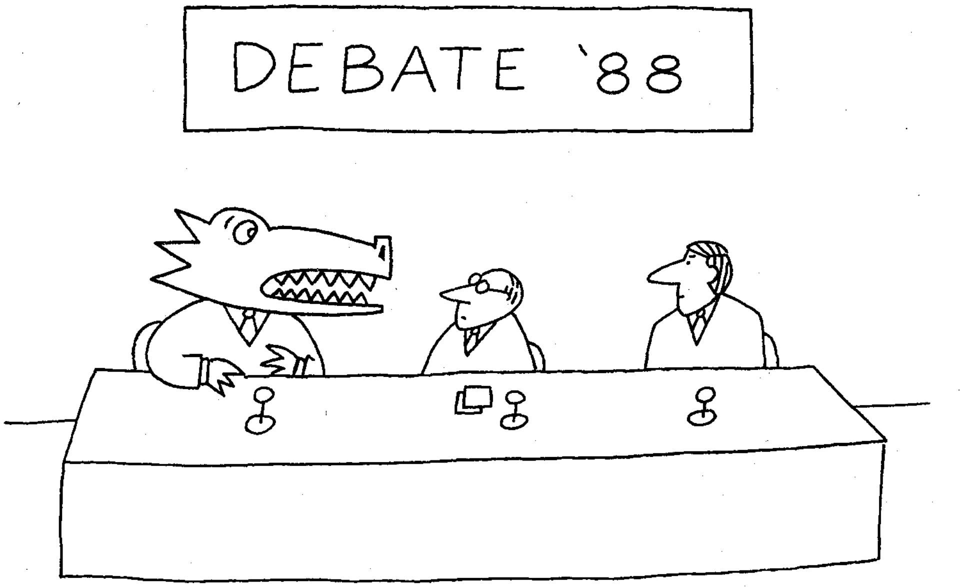

“A mean streak—moi?”

• •

two chairs on the road outside his house. This is a statement of defiance by the family of the murdered man. Among the people coming to pay their respects is the killer. He has to come, he cannot stay away; and he is almost certainly known. And now two men's lives are spoiled: the killer's, and the relation of the dead man who will have to kill the killer. The code demands no less; it isn't open to a man who wishes to be at peace with himself to walk away.

So deep for me was this idea of honor and the feud that the film of “Romeo and Juliet” (with John Barrymore and Basil Rathbone) was one of my earliest true theatrical experiences, the story to me being not so much a story of love as of the family feud. What fear, what horror at all that was to follow when the blood darkened the shirt of Mercutio! Honor—that was what I saw in some of the murders around us. Not the barbarism that, as I understood later, outsiders attributed to us.

Some such way of feeling I attributed to Ellen in her childhood, in the small town where she had spent such happy summers with her extended family. Violence, where it existed, would not have appeared to her as naked as it would to absolute outsiders. Too many other things were attached.

She said, “I think it's just the frustration. So much of the violence is now in the black community. The black people don't like me to say this, but if you go to the penitentiaries you'll see it's true—a high population of young blacks.”

How had she arrived at her civility, her calmness, her wish to be fair—in a state with the reputation that Mississippi had?

She said, “I went to college. I think that made an impression on me. I had a very good professor. They took a personal interest in you. And my father died when I was young. I was barely thirteen. That was when I started looking at myself and other people. I think I had to grow up too soon. I was living in a small town. My father didn't leave a lot of money for us to live on. And so my mother had to go to work. She was a nurse, and she went back to work. And I—I went back and lived with my aunts, to go to school in that same little country town. My mother worked very hard to send me to college. She was very successful in her occupation. She was a strong woman, and she believed in fairness to all people. When she was in training, she nursed everybody. She grew up with a great regard for all people.”

Abruptly, out of random memories called up just then, Ellen said, “This story really did impress me. I was talking about it to one of my relations not long ago. This really happened, and I was there. I was eight. I was visiting my aunt, and she had a wonderful maid, and several of my cousins were there. Myrtle—the maid—played the piano. She could play anything by ear. She kept all us children entertained with her music, and everything. One time, she had a little roadster car, and she took us riding. And we really loved her. She was a black maid. Maybe one of her boyfriends gave her the car. She was quite a girl. She wore bright lipstick, and she had a big gold tooth in front.

“Anyway, she was missing one day. She lived in a house behind my aunt's house. And finally they went out to see about her. And they found her, and she was dead—in a wardrobe, upside down. She had been hit on the head with a pine knot. They called it a lighter knot—it was to start fires with. They thought it was one of her boyfriends, but we never knew. It was awful. I knew that was wrong. My aunt was grief-stricken. I think that if it had been a white woman killed like that they would have found out who did it. But I think that's something I'm thinking now. I don't think I thought that when I was eight years old. To me Myrtle was Myrtle. I didn't think of her being black. She would snap her fingers and dance.” And Ellen, remembering, sitting in her upholstered chair, made a gesture and snapped her fingers, too. “She was just a lot of fun. She was the daughter of the woman who went from house to house doing the laundry. They did it in great big pots. This was before rural electrification, when they started having running water in most of the houses. My aunt had running water and a bathroom inside, because my daddy had built a water tower when he had lived there—before I was born.

“I went back to her house.” Myrtle's house, at the back of Ellen's aunt's house. “They had removed her body. But I saw where it was. That was just nosey. My aunt didn't want me to go see it. But I wanted to, and she let me.”

That story released another memory in Ellen: “My mother and father used to tell me about when they would hang people in the courthouse square. Legal hangings, not lynchings. That was when my father and mother were children. And my daddy was born in 1897. And that was just abhorrent to me—and it was to them. These were stories that people would tell you as you were growing up. I think we've come a long way. It seems like people

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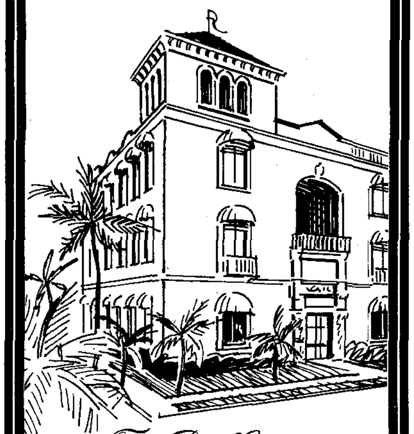

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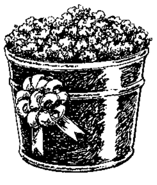

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are becoming more civilized, I hope.”

The stories told to Ellen as she was growing up were frontier stories; that was how I regarded them. They had echoes of any number of western films; and it was remarkable to hear them from someone who had just turned sixty. In our lifetime, then, it seemed that she had moved from a frontier culture, or the relics of a frontier culture, to late twentieth-century Jackson and the United States. It gave a new cast to my thoughts, and a new cast to my conversations with people.

Ellen's thoughts, just before we separated, were of her father. “My father told me you never got ahead by stepping on somebody's back. We all need to come up together.”

In no other part of the world had I found people so driven by the idea of good behavior and the good religious life. And that was true for black and white.

MY thoughts were running on the frontier, the life at the extremity of a culture. And I went early one afternoon to see Louise, nearly eighty and living alone in a big house in Jackson, with a garden too much for her now, and dry after many weeks without rain.

In her old cherrywood bookcase, American work from perhaps 1840, which had taken on a lovely deep color after nearly a century and a half, there were small leather-bound volumes of *The Spectator* of Addison and Steele, issued by a Philadelphia firm in 1847. A reminder of the Colonial past here, of an idea of civility and education at odds with the world around. A reissue in 1847 of *The Spectator*—more than a hundred years out of date—at the time when Francis Parkman was making his journey on the Oregon Trail and coming across reminders, almost as terrible as bones, of the settlers who had passed that way: abandoned furniture, pieces perhaps from the early eighteen-forties, like Louise's bookcase, which those settlers had loaded on their carts and wagons, hoping to take them West.

In a drawer of the cherrywood bookcase there were documents and copies of documents connected with Louise's family history. Her family went back to Colonial times. Her husband's ancestor came from Pennsylvania. He came to Mississippi in about 1820. “All wilderness, you know,” Louise said. He was part of a group, families who had intermarried. They hadn't come directly to Mississippi. “They had travelled together in their migrations through Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama.” She gave this idea of the kinship of the migrating group: “When the two young men”—her husband's ancestors—“were of an age to marry, they went up to Oxford and married two Tankersley girls they had met.” The Tankersleys were one of the families of the migrating group. “The land hadn't been cleared, and travel was hard. And when they got there they stayed.

“My grandfather was a sixteen-year-old boy when he went to the Civil War and fought at Shiloh in Tennessee. He survived it, and came back to northeast Alabama and started his family. Things were hard after the war, and then my grandfather died. My father left home at the age of fifteen and came and stayed with an uncle in the Delta in Mississippi. He had some education, and he paid a Baptist minister to teach him bookkeeping, and he opened a little store and began buying land in the Delta. *And it was beautiful country.* Now it's one big cotton patch, all cleared and drained. But then it was like William Faulkner's ‘The Bear’—one of his finest pieces of writing. It was just wilderness country—great oaks that had not been harvested. This was before the plantations. It was just gorgeous. It was a land of flowers, all kinds of wild iris and wild violets, and water lilies. And alligators. They were just beginning the plantations in that part of the Delta. It was hard. You see, we had malaria. I had malaria every summer when I was a child. It took a little while to clear the Delta. It flooded nearly every spring.

“When I was a little girl—say, in 1915—they were still clearing it. They would go and chop around these mighty oaks, and they would let them die, and then they would cut them. When they were going to clear out a field, they would kill the trees. I never paid any attention to it. It was what they did. I took it for granted. I played in the woods. If you were not at home for meals, you were punished, because you had gone too far away and they had to go out and look for you seriously. Everybody had so many children then, you know. There was no birth control. We had so many. And many families lost lots of children."

Pioneer land, the Delta region of Mississippi. Yet Mississippi, for a frontier state, had the curious complication of slavery, even before the days of the cotton plantations beside the river. The frontier, the pioneers, the solitude; but then, also, the cheap black labor. What did Louise think now? The black population was now very large in the country where as a child she had been delighted by the wildflowers and the big trees of the forest.

She said, "There was not much reason for being in the Delta unless you were a big landowner. You could hardly have cleared it yourself. Parts of it were just canebrake."

"I've read that word. What is it?"

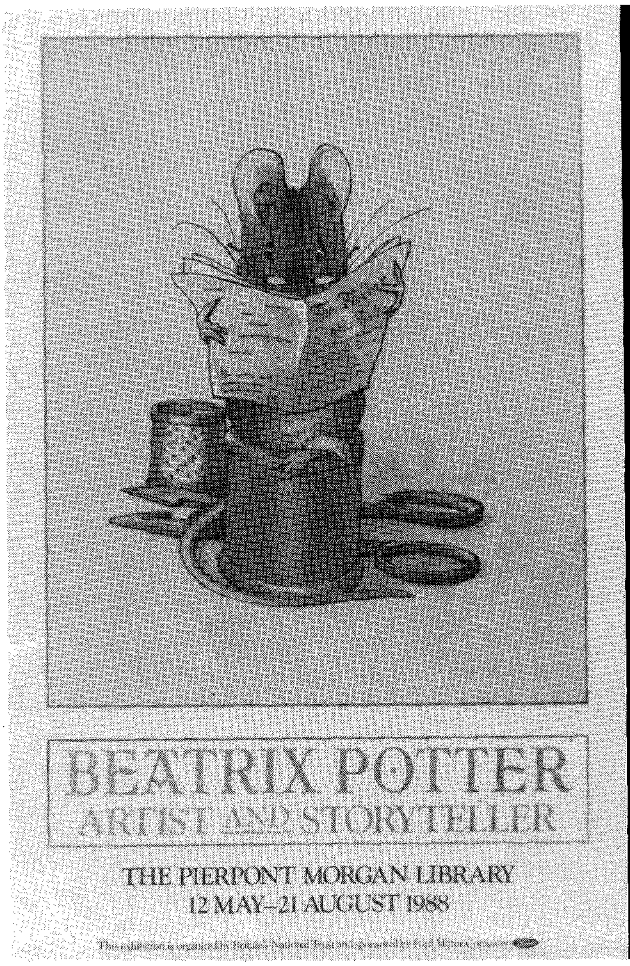
"A wild type of cane, not anything you cultivate. We had plenty of help—servants. After they were freed, they just stayed where they were, you know. They lived and multiplied everywhere. As many of the whites grew up, they left. But the blacks stayed. And one reason they stayed—it's interesting to read the obituaries even now—is that they are very gregarious people. They don't bother too much about lines of marriage and that sort of thing, but they are very devoted families."

That idea, of the importance of the family, I had heard about in West Africa, in the Ivory Coast. It overrode the idea of marital fidelity. I had been told that in the Ivory Coast it would be considered frivolous to give infidelity as a cause for divorce. And that went with another African idea: you didn't marry a person; you allied yourself to a family.

Louise said, "I feel very concerned about the black thing, the black problem. My maid told me this morning that up and down their street they are out running and shooting guns in the air—these young blacks." A twisted version of the frontier, here in the city of Jackson. "I don't know how we are going to come out of it. Some of them are very intelligent and ambitious. Some are primitive. Some white people are, too, but maybe not so many. We are not multiplying as fast as they do."

What had happened to the plantation that her father created?

"My father died when he was fifty. He sold about a thousand acres just before the Great Depression, and he had about seven hundred acres left. Mud in winter, dust in summer. My



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father bought a Chalmers automobile. This was even before the time of radio. It was a diversion." Sometimes they just sat in the Chalmers for the pleasure, not going anywhere. "We lived quietly. If a town was five miles away, that was a long way." But later, when the roads improved and the cars improved, people in the Delta became famous in Mississippi for their willingness to travel long distances for dinner or other entertainment.

Louise was getting tired now, and no longer as able to complete a train of thought as when we had started. She said, "The blacks were so oppressed during that time that it was a peaceful place. They didn't do the sort of things they do now. We had very little trouble. They went their way, we went ours. We were used to having help. During the Depression, my sister had a maid. She had a daughter the same age—" But this story was never finished. Perhaps it was too painful to recall; perhaps Louise wished to keep it buried. It led to this thought, unexpectedly: "I have a great respect for what the blacks call poor white trash. I think they have suffered. They, too, need opportunities." Then Louise said wearily, as if with the weight now of her illness and age, "But the needs of the world are so great that they are overwhelming."

The combination of thoughts about blacks and poor white trash, who needed help as much as anybody, and about her sister and the Depression led to this story:

"During the depths of the Depression—we have not had anything ever in the class of that Great Depression—we lived not far from a penal farm. One of the trusties up there worked in the homes of employees of the penal farm. Ah, it was something that electrified the Delta! This daughter of one of the warders there—they said she was having an affair with one of these black prisoners. Unheard of. But anyway the prisoner killed her father. And then they set out to capture him, and there was a reward of two thousand dollars. A big sum then, and this young planter's son just walked into a barn loft to bring him down. And, of course, the prisoner shot him and killed him. Twenty-three or twenty-four, the handsomest man you ever saw, and a fine young man; but he just walked to his death. And then, of course, they took the black man and killed him. This happened about ten miles away from where we lived. And it just really upset everybody. But now we have rapes here all the time. It was a very, very rare thing then. Now they don't seem to make much of it. I was a young woman, about twenty. It affected me very deeply. It was very tragic. But there were occasional instances of violence like that."

We talked about the Emmett Till murder, in 1955. Emmett Till (how extraordinary the names of people become when they are associated with big and tragic events) was a fourteen-year-old black youth from Chicago who, while visiting relatives near Money, had been accused of whistling at and putting his arm around a white woman in a store, and had been murdered. It was something that had added to Mississippi's bad reputation.

Louise said, "Parts of my family were still living there in the Delta. And he did more than whistle at her. My brother had a drugstore in Sumner, where they had that trial"—the trial of the white men who were accused of murdering Emmett Till. "We are not that kind of people." She meant that the woman who worked as a store clerk—like the woman Emmett Till was said to have whistled at—was of a different social class from her family, who were planters. "My mother and sisters never worked in that commissary. We always had hired help." "Commissary" was a plantation word, meaning the plantation store, where workers bought goods on credit, against their wages. "My father didn't think it was a suitable place for the women of his family to be. All kinds of people came in there—sometimes drinking."

I had already been struck, in the women's accounts of their childhoods, by the modest jobs that people of good family held. One of Ellen's aunts had been a postmistress, and now Louise was reporting that her brother ran a drugstore. It was as though, in the poverty of the South, class was something in the mind and consciousness of a family, related to an idea of good behavior and seemliness.

Louise said, "The civil-rights movement altered everything. It's good and it's bad. I wouldn't like to live anywhere where there are not any blacks. I've lived among them all my life, and I like them. And right now"—and she meant in spite of the crime in Jackson, and although the city was moving toward a black majority and might soon even have a black mayor—"they are warmhearted and humorous. I would miss them. But—we have such a mass of them here in Jackson. And, wherever they are, they are in a mass, because they like their own kind of people, and they are not going to settle where there are not other black people—they're lonely. This woman was in Iowa, and she was earning much more, but she came back here, because it was lonely for her there. But they are forming gangs now in Jackson. If they could be scattered about the country, it would be better. But we are not Russia. We can't do that."

It was almost time for me to go. She half wanted to be free of the need to talk, but there was also a side of her that, having begun to talk, wished to go on. And once more she turned to her childhood in the Delta, when the land had been forest.

"We fed ourselves, but we lived below what would now be called the poverty line. It was a privilege to live in the Delta. At night, we would hear animals in the forest. A panther. It sounded like a woman crying. My stepmother used to tell the story of a lady called Miss Sunshine Easterling—Sunshine Easterling!—who wanted to go to a party. But there was no transportation except down the railroad track. So—away they went, down the track with a handcar. Pumping it up and down, you know."

I didn't know, really. I had seen the handcar she mentioned only in American serial thriller films when I was a child in Trinidad.

"And they were wrecked by a freight train, and Miss Sunshine Easterling was crippled for life," Louise said. "That story was to prevent us from yearning too much for a social life. We certainly were isolated in the Delta in those days.

"I remember one Christmas I got a most beautiful real beaver hat. It must have come from a store like Marshall Field's, because there were no stores anywhere nearby that had anything like that. And there was nowhere for me to go in my beaver hat. So I put it on on Christmas afternoon and walked down the railroad track, hoping that somebody would see me. But nobody did. I was twelve at the time."

SOME days later (when the rain had come), I went to call on Eudora Welty and mentioned this story of Louise's about the beaver hat. Miss Welty was only a year younger than Louise, and she knew the kind of hat that Louise might have got for Christmas in 1920.

"Those hats were called Madge Evans hats. They were named after a child actress. They were sold only in one store in Jackson. Many years later, I met the child actress. Of course, she wasn't a child when I met her, but she had kept up with her acting career. I met her in New York. She was a little bit older than me. She said, 'I know your work, because in one story you had a Madge Evans hat. I'm Madge Evans.' She was a little girl like us when she wore the hat. The hat was wide-brimmed all around, with streamers that hung down your back as far as your waist. They were wonderful hats. And there were straw hats as well, for summer. In those days, you wore hats all the time. You wore hats even to Sunday school."

THERE is no landscape like the landscape of our childhood. For Louise, though her father had been a planter, the "big cotton patch" that the planters had created in the Delta was a disfiguring of the forest she had known as a child. And for Mary, born in the Delta thirty-five years later, there would be no landscape like the flat, stripped land she had grown up in.

Mary said, "I think there is nothing more beautiful than the flat, flat land and the big, big sky."

She was showing me the small country town of Canton, fifteen miles or so north of Jackson, giving meaning to a shabbiness I had driven through earlier without comprehension. I had noticed only the broken-down air of the main road through the town, and had noticed the large number of black people in a town where there appeared to be little to do. Now, as I was taken by Mary through the streets around the main square, the layers of history all at once became apparent, as they did in so many places in the South.

The town had been incorporated in the mid-eighteen-thirties, but most of the buildings on the square had been put up in the twenty years from 1890 to 1910. The Civil War had intervened; and on a street not far from the main square was the first reminder.

It was a street of pretty, old houses, with black people in them. Some of the people could be seen sitting on the porches. On one side of this street was an open green space with a gray granite obelisk. It was inscribed on one side, "Erected by W. H. Howcott to the memory of the good and loyal servants who followed the fortunes of Harvey Scouts during the Civil War." On another side was "A tribute to my faithful Servant and Friend Willis Howcott, a Colored Boy of rare loyalty and faithfulness whose memory I cherish with deep gratitude. W. H. Howcott." And on a third side was "Loyal, Faithful, True Were Each and All of Them." The fourth side of the obelisk was bare.

The slave, Willis, had taken the name of the master. Had the "colored boy" who went to the war with his master really been a boy, or had he been a man who remained a boy even in death? True feeling was there; but how much of defiance had there also been in this obelisk put up after the war to celebrate the loyalty of slaves?

The obelisk was on a black street. A memorial to the Harvey Scouts was in the white cemetery, elsewhere. The slave memorial was still tended. The grass around the gray obelisk was neatly cut; on the base was a bouquet of artificial flowers. Black people sat on porches not far away. Black people walked past while we looked. Didn't they mind?

They didn't. But, Mary said, it was something that hadn't been put to them. Perhaps they would mind if someone came one day and put certain things to them.

In the white cemetery, some streets away, and centrally placed in it, was the memorial to the Harvey Scouts. It was also an obelisk, but not as plain as

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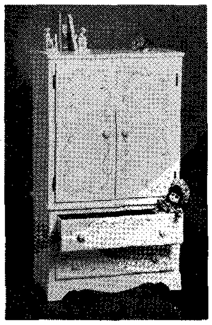

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the one for the servants. It was carved with crossed flags, a star and crescent, and there was a metal plaque on the memorial. Some verse had also been carved:

> Long since has beat the last tattoo
> Disbanded are the Gray and Blue
> And Peace reigns now where
> Troopers Drew
> Their sabres Bright to Dare and Do
> Led Forward by Ad. Harvey.

It was unsettling, that last line; it made one think that the first four lines had been borrowed. Yet there had been sacrifice: "CAPT. ADDISON HARVEY, BORN JUNE 1837, KILLED APRIL 9, 1865. Just as the Country's Flag was Furled forever, Death saved him the pain of defeat."

At the far end of the cemetery, not far from a corner with old Jewish graves, were small tombstones, in rows of five running the length of the cemetery, each stone marked "Unknown Confederate Soldier." It was shocking, in this small-town cemetery, the thought of all these unclaimed young men. The remains, Mary said, would have been gathered together some time after the war. The headstones were put up early in this century. The Harvey memorial and the memorial to the black servants preceded them by a few years.

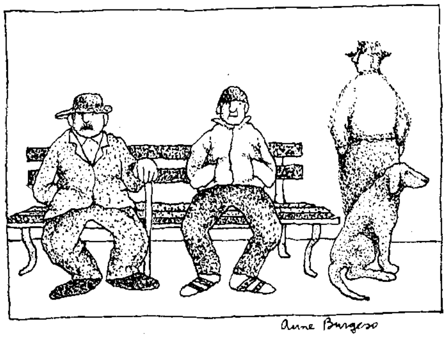
The cemetery was still in use. Other people, with heavier needs than ours, were driving about the lanes, as we had been doing. There were two new graves, below green awnings marked with the undertaker's name—Breeland. And not far away was the undertaker's own family plot, with a large stone marked "Breeland." Mary said, "Some people think it's advertising."

Small as it was, Canton had its social and racial divisions. In the black areas, many of the houses were in disrepair, and many of them were shotgun houses. There were other, better black areas, but even new developments appeared to be getting run-down. There didn't seem to be much doing in Canton. In an older part of the town were settlements associated with the timber industry, when there had been one. Milltown was for the white workers. Next to it was the black area, with a designation that recalled the cabins of the slave plantations: Sawmill Quarters.

There is still a furniture factory in Canton, and there are other factories outside the town. But the industrial area was in a mess. It looked like a tropical slum. It was hard to think, when we got to the area of the country club—with a membership of professional people from Canton and from Jackson—that the two areas shared the same climate and vegetation. In one area, the sun seemed part of the blight and torpor. In the other, among the tall trees and well-cut driveways, the sunlight was like part of the general privilege of the place.

"Sun," "sunlight"—to me they had always been different words. "Sunlight" was a nice word. "Sun" was harsher: it was what the sunlight of early morning in Trinidad turned to at about eight, when it was time to go to school. The slogan on the label for Trinidad grapefruit juice, when I was a child, was "Fruit Ripened in Tropical Sunshine." I had always thought that the words were too pretty. "Fruit Ripened in Hot Sun" would have been truer to the climate I lived in; but then they might have been less of a slogan. "Tropical sunshine"—they were tourist words, I always thought. And, indeed, they could have little meaning for someone who had known nothing else.

Agricultural and industrial depression now; the civil-rights movement twenty to thirty years before; the Great Depression before that; and Reconstruction; and the Civil War—it seemed, considering the layers of history whose memorials or remains one could see in a place like Canton, that the South had moved from crisis to crisis. And at the back of it all was the institution that had seeded most of the crises, or aggravated them: slavery, which had led to what some might see as the present superfluity of untrained black people, people no longer needed by those whites in a machine age.



Mary said, "It's been frustrating to me, because the enormity of the problem is something I know I'm not going to see solved. It's heartbreaking to see people living like that. And it will keep the area from progressing. Economically and culturally. These people don't read books, or even newspapers. TV is the only thing. And, in fact, some of them probably can't read. Not in the way that you and I can read. They can read a sign, but not a thought or an idea."

During our drive through the town, she had shown me a red brick high school that had been turned into a furniture store after the schools were desegregated. "The enrollment in the public system made the building unnecessary," she said. She meant that white people had withdrawn their children and sent them instead to private and on occasion Christian academies. But now that was a financial strain on some people, and people were beginning to think again about the public system. "I've been encouraged recently, because some of the people here who would not be considered liberal are realizing that so much of the future of the town is tied in to the school system."

"Is there still bitterness about desegregation?"

"A lot of the bitterness from the sixties has gone into the second generation. But now it's more of an economic resentment. People resent seeing the welfare programs, like food stamps—and there is something that provides food and milk for babies. And, of course, people who have worked hard for their families are certainly going to resent seeing people being given for nothing the equivalent of what you've had to work hard to earn. Medicaid is another thing. There are clinics for people who pay according to their income. Which means that they are supported by the federal government—that is, other people's income tax.

"I'm not a bleeding heart racially, believing in universal brotherhood. People are too different. I believe in God, but I'm not religious. This is the Bible Belt. For some reason, Southern people—black and white—have a tremendous capacity for faith. When I go to a church service where people are extremely devout, I feel I'm missing something. But it doesn't last. Religion is very social here. Fellowship, church suppers—things like that. And I suppose I'm not a particularly social person."

"When did you start thinking of yourself as a Southerner, somebody different?"

"I've always felt it. We're so proud of it. We are permeated by the feeling that the South is special. My family were always interested in the literary aspects. We were very proud of our writers here."

What about the other side—the bigotry, the violence? Was there one view that could hold it all?

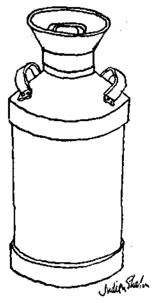
"I was aware of the other side. The violence, the deprivation. There was a very ugly incident when I was growing up." She was referring to the Emmett Till murder. "This all happened close to Greenwood, where I was living. This was in 1955. I was eleven. I remember reading it in the newspaper first. I had a friend, and she knew the people in the store. And I remember people at school saying it wasn't true—that he was still living in Chicago, and that people were trying to make Mississippi look bad. But even at eleven I knew that that was a sad way of thinking, and that people who thought like that were of the same social class as the woman at the store."

Here it was again, the emphasis on social distinctions. How did they operate in the Delta, where lives were so isolated and confined?

Mary said, "My grandmother would say of some people that they were not folks. That was probably her favorite phrase. She was very conscious of who were and were not folks."

"Who were folks?"

"Generally, folks were people who weren't transient, who'd lived here for some time. You knew their families. And if they'd moved in, say, from Lafayette County, you would know their families. You knew they were the same kind of people. They knew how to behave. They didn't say 'nigger.' Nor did they say 'ain't.' People who said 'ain't' and 'nigger' were not folks—that would definitely put you beyond the pale then and there. My grandmother was a stickler for manners. If you put your elbows on the table, she would pick up those heavy silver knives and she would hit your elbows, if there wasn't company—in those days people had the heavy silverware, not the stainless steel. I think we behaved like that because we genuinely thought that this—the South—was the best place in the world. To be technical about it, my grandmother came from Alabama. She had lived in Mississippi since she was married. I can remember my parents talking to me and trying to explain the racial problem. And since nobody really understood it . . ."



I was interested in that idea. I said, "No one has put it like that to me."

"I don't think they did. Understand the race problem. I still don't think they do. I know that people of my grandmother's generation—her generation and black people of the same generation had a closeness that doesn't exist anymore. In those days, no one had any money. You know, the Depression, and things. A lot of the jobs the black people had depended on the white people—in the houses and yards, and things. But the white people depended on the black people, too. I think that at that time there was a better respect between the races."

"People outside didn't have that impression. There were the lynchings."

"There were, exactly. But the people I was talking about—and I'm sure that people are much more capable of violence than I realize—the people who carried out the inhumanities were not typical of everyone."

"What effect does the physical appearance of Canton have on you—the town you showed me?"

"That kind of question makes us defensive."

"No, no. I don't want that."

"What did I show you? Buildings and fields."

"You showed me a lot that was rundown. It isn't worthy of the history." And I meant—though I didn't put it precisely—that if you took away the cemetery and the main square there would be little in Canton that wasn't contemporary slum. The land and setting were hard to associate with a great and difficult history. How, in such a setting, did she support her sense of history?

Mary said, "It may not be worthy. But I don't think poverty and deprivation are limited to the South. I think we are addressing the economic problems more than we have ever done. People are addressing the problems of black and white as of one group."

"What do you like about the South?"

"It's a very nourishing place to live. I like the people, even though I'm not close to them. If there was some sort of tragedy, people would rally round, even though they were not my family. And the sense of the past can be satisfying, even though my family is not from this area. What did Faulkner say? 'The past is more real than the present'? I can't remember the exact words. But it's that the past is something we all live with. Possibly, in larger places they don't put the importance on the past. We're preoccupied with the past. Some people think that's because we lost the war."

William said, "People up North think they know better than we do about problems and people down here. They think they know how the black man thinks and the white man thinks. They have missed miserably on the black man." The North had disrupted the South in 1861, and had done it again after the Second World War.

He was a businessman, of a prominent Mississippi family. He was in his forties. He loved the outdoor life, and was athletic and handsome. He appeared to be blessed in many ways. What came out after a few minutes of conversation was that he was a man to whom religion was supremely important. His judgments, even the tough ones he had delivered at the beginning of our meeting, were contained within his idea of the religious life.

We sat on rocking chairs in front of his desk: the tradition of the porch, transferred here to an air-conditioned office.

William said, "The Bible says the Lord helps those who help themselves, and I really believe that. I feel there are not enough people trying to help themselves. And I don't think that the help these people need is a free check."

I asked about the development of his faith.

"Both sets of my grandparents were

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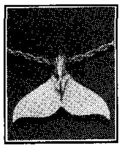

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very strong workers in the Baptist Church. My parents were and are strong members of the church. I don't remember us not praying or reading a Bible. I made my profession of faith when I was seven years old. I guess I went to my parents first, after hearing the Sunday-school teachers talk about Jesus and the Lord—and I believe that he did come out of Heaven and walk among us and die for us, to give us an opportunity to be with him in Heaven. And finally I said publicly, 'I want to accept Christ.' And they said, 'Fine, let's go to the preacher.' And he talked to me. And I guess they felt my feeling was strong enough, and I was baptized at seven. I grew up around it, I accepted it, and I made that profession of faith.

"I had a dream around that time—but it didn't cross my mind until many years later. I was spending the night with my grandmother. I was sleeping on the porch. I remember sitting up in bed—waking up real fast—and I thought I saw Jesus Christ walking in through the back door. The door had a little knocker, a wooden ball on a string, and I remember hearing that knocker, and the door opening. And I just had that vision of Jesus Christ walking in through that door. And I remember sitting up all night to see if he was going out through the back door. But he never did. I never thought much about that dream until six or seven years ago. I was riding down the highway, and it just flashed back in my mind. At that point, I really realized that it was Jesus Christ entering my heart. And the reason I didn't see him leave by that back door was that he didn't leave us. I just haven't discussed that story with my family. But I remember that dream and that whole night as if it were yesterday. I feel that Jesus Christ entered my heart that day and he's never left."

"Did it change your attitude toward other people?"

"I hope I have more patience with people. I hope I'm quicker to see the good than I am to see the shortcomings. I certainly try to have a short memory for bad experiences. I try to forgive and forget."

"What about irreligious people? What do you think of them?"

"I guess I feel that if I can set an example to them I can encourage them to be less irreligious. Nor do I think less of a person who has a different religion from mine."

"Do you feel you are in a religious community?"

"I think I am. I'm not sure that the religious part of the community is keeping up with the population growth. I'm not sure that the church *membership* is keeping up. But I realize that there are many Christians. I was encouraged by the short patience people had with the Gary Hart–Donna Rice situation. I am certainly encouraged about Christianity in this country and the work of the Lord."

"Why aren't you in the church?"

He misunderstood the question. "I was there until nine last night."

"No, no. I was asking why you aren't in the ministry."

"I believe the Lord has a will for every one of us, a plan for us. He knows what he wants us to do. If we were all architects, we would all have pretty buildings but we wouldn't have farmers to grow food. I think that his plan for creation is that it takes a lot of people to make up this world. And he needs workers in all of these areas."

"Is this why you feel as you do about people who do no work?"

"I have never expressed it like that. But I think that is why I feel the way I do."

"Do you think men need to work?"

"No question about that. The Lord created the Garden of Eden and he put Adam and Eve there, and when they sinned he put them out of the Garden of Eden and told them to go to work."

"You feel that people are still working out that sin?"

"I don't think I'm still working out their sin. But I think that all of us have sins. The human race is a sinful race—and this is where we are, and that's what we have to deal with now. I feel strongly that we are required to work for six days and rest on the seventh. The Lord talks about giving each individual talents, and the Lord told us to use them. I think that working is an important part of using those talents. Some people are writers, farmers, architects. These are talents that the Lord gave them.

"Someone wrote to my father several months ago. In this letter he was saying, 'I enjoy my work. How does a successful businessman continue being a Christian? Should he stay with his business, or should he go back into the church?' My father wrote a letter to explain why it's necessary for a Christian businessman to be in the world. Our own preacher here has said several times that, with the TV pastors getting into such hot water and getting such bad attention, he's been seeing some doors closed against him; and the responsibility for leading people to Christianity is more on the shoulders of laymen."

I said, "Some people are saying that it's the work of the Devil that those TV pastors are in trouble."

William said, "When I fail at something, I fail. I feel like I've got to take the consequences for my failure. I also know that I've got outside forces working against me. But I know that before I start. So I can't pass the buck. The Devil might have made me do it, but it's still my problem, my responsibility. The ultimate accountability is mine."

I asked him to talk about accountability.

He sucked in his breath. "Whoo! It's difficult to go public about it. I guess it goes back to what I was taught by Mom and Dad—that if you have responsibility you have accountability. The more responsibility, the more people are affected. And I think the accountability to Christ is the ultimate responsibility I have. This also gives me a background to what Mom and Dad were teaching about responsibility and accountability. Perhaps the people dependent on me the most are my family. Then, there are the people I'm tied into business with. They've given me a certain responsibility, and I've accountability. We are in business to serve customers. And that gives us another whole segment of people we're accountable to—people we'll never see."

So the religious ideas of the God-given talent, work, and accountability coincided with sound business practice. It was true of other religious groups as well, this coincidence of religious devotion and business sense: one kind of dedication encouraging, and even becoming, another kind of dedication. It was true of certain Hindu caste groups and certain minority or heretical sects in Islam. But religions and cultures have their own identities. One isn't just like another. The idea of the God-given talent is contained in the Hindu idea of dharma, but the Hindu religious-business dedication is different from the dedication that William was talking about. However much the Hindu businessman's practices appear to contain the idea of service, he has a contract with God alone, and not with men.

And it was of his contract with men that William went on to talk. He said, "To me, without religion there wouldn't be any purpose. It's religion that gives us purpose in being here. The purpose is to serve the Lord. And the only way we have of serving him is to serve mankind. We can't give him anything he doesn't already have. We can't touch that. Nothing he doesn't already have, unless it's our heart."

William spent a certain amount of his spare time on church work. He gave "devotions" sometimes; he taught Sunday school sometimes. He worked with the Boy Scouts. Did he, so full of his church, judge people according to the degree of their faith?

He read the question as half a political one, connected with "equal opportunity" and the racial issue. He said—puzzlingly, unless you understood the semi-political question he felt he was answering—"I try not to judge an individual as an individual. I don't have the facts to judge on. But I try to judge and weigh his actions against the work that has to be done—to weigh his strengths and weaknesses as I can interpret them. Though that's what I used to be *told*—that this person fits this particular job. Maybe they did, maybe they didn't. But what that does is that the individual knows intuitively 'I'm here because you've been told to put me here. It doesn't matter about my job performance. Therefore it doesn't matter what I do here.' And at that point the person loses incentives and a proper motivation."

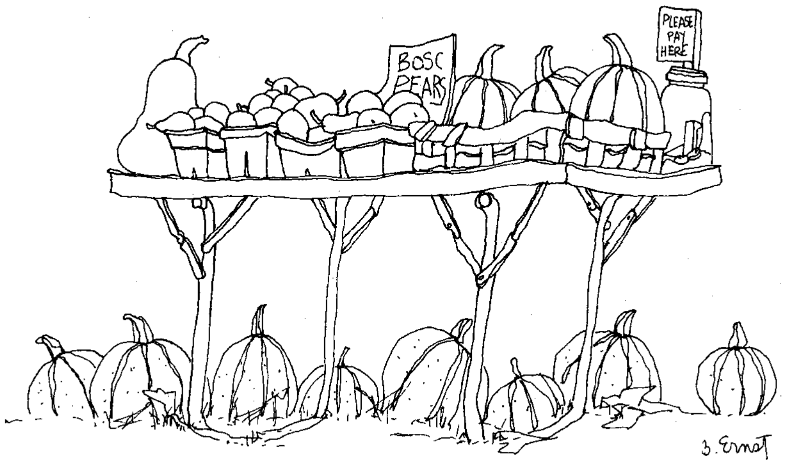
But William talked about this wearily, as though he had talked about it many times before and had no faith now that the plain and obvious things he was saying would ever be heeded.

Then, rocking, leaving the subject of equal opportunity aside, he said, "I have such a wholesome respect for the early Native Americans. I really feel they believed that the Lord lived in everything on earth. That the rocks, the trees, the bush, the animals—the Lord lived in everything, and they were part of it. And what I think of the early Native Americans is that they had an almost reverent respect for nature. For them the life of a blade of grass was as important as a great buffalo. They didn't make any distinction. And they probably realized, more than the greatest scientist on earth now, that everything on this earth is totally related. They understood the chain reaction that comes from getting one thing in nature out of balance with the others. And I think that because of the reverence they had for all living things they had a reverence for mankind that I'm not sure we'll ever see again."

"How did you find out about the Indians?"

"I've read a few books. I've made a few trips out West and talked with a few Indians by the roadside. And I was impressed with the minuteness of the attention to small details that they had. For every action there is a reaction. And what worries me the most now is that where I see a new highway or subdivision, where they're clearing land, there's major destruction of plant life, animal life that can't be replaced. The thing that disturbs me about that is that it's not done with any consciousness or concern. It's only done with concern for the dollar.

"Go down on your stomach on the ground. Look at a square foot of grass for about forty-five minutes. See the life, the insects. And



magnify that to the size of a project."

"But Mississippi needs investment."

"I don't know how it can be worked out. The more concern you have for these little things, and that side of life, the more concern you're going to have for your neighbor."

The contract with other men, serving God by serving mankind—they were themes to which William returned.

"I feel that man and nature have to go together. The Lord put us here to be caretaker of things. A lot of my thoughts are tied back with religion and the Lord's creation."

I felt I had begun to understand how William's fundamentalist faith—from the outside so constricting—was in fact complete and flexible. The mixture of the Old Testament and the New, the life of Jesus and the Book of Genesis, made a whole. The sanctity of the created world, the good life of conscience, the loving of one's neighbor as oneself: they ran together, and they appeared to fit the Mississippi character and history—the love of nature and the outdoor life, the admiration for the pantheism of the Indians, the love of family and community, the resentment of outside interference, which could feel almost like interference with a religious code.

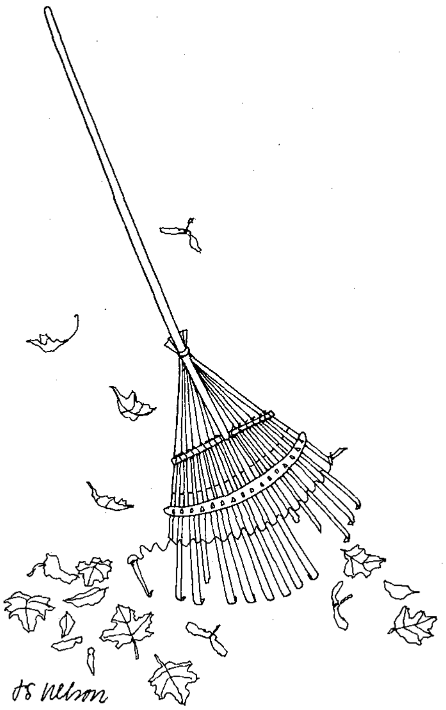
William said of his religion, "I don't wear it on my sleeve. I hope I don't flash it around. It's just part of me. I don't want to be a goody-goody or better-than-thou, because I don't feel that way. I just want to be part of God's creation. His handiwork is in everything. And the more respect we have for his creation the more respect we have for our fellow-man."

IT was of the redneck, the unlikely descendant of the frontiersman, that I talked to Eudora Welty when I went to call on her. I had arrived early, and waited on the street below the dripping trees. She was ready early, and could be clearly seen through her uncurtained front window. When I felt the time was suitable, I walked up the wet path to her front door. On the door, in her strong writing, was a note asking people not to bring any more books for her to sign. She wanted to save as much of her energy as possible now for her work. I knocked; and she opened, like someone waiting to do just that. She was extraordinarily familiar from her photographs.

The frontier was so much in her stories—a fact I had only just begun to appreciate. And she was willing to talk of the frontiersman character.

"He's not a villain. But there's a whole side of him that's *cunning*. Sometimes it goes over the line and he becomes an outright scoundrel. The blacks never lived in that part of the state. They came over to work on the plantations. Most of the rednecks grew up without black people, and yet they hate them. That's where all the bad things originate—that's the appeal they make. Rednecks worked in saw mills, and things like that. And they had small farms. They are all fiercely proud. They dictate the politics of the state. They take their excitement—in those small towns—when the politicians and the evangelists come. Scare everybody, outwit everybody, beat everybody, kill everybody—that's the frontiersman's mentality."

I told her the story Ellen had heard as a child about the rednecks to the south of the town where she spent her summers—the story of travelling salesmen who had been roughed up and hitched to a plow and made to plow a field. Ellen had said that this story came down from the past; and I had thought of it as a romantic story of the wickedness of times past, an exaggerated story about people living without law. But Eudora Welty took the story seriously. She said, "I can believe the story about the salesmen. I've heard about punishing people by making them plow farms."



We talked about Mississippi and its reputation.

"At the time of the troubles, many people passed through and called on me," she said. "They wanted me to confirm what they thought. And all of them thought I lived in a state of terror. 'Aren't you scared of them all the time?' A young man came and said that he had been told that a Mr. So-and-So, who was a terrible racist, owned all of Jackson, all the banks and hotels, and that he was doing terrible things to black people. It was a fantasy. It wasn't true. The violence here is not nearly as frightening as the Northern—urban—brand."

A frontier state, limited culturally—had that been hard for her as a writer, and as a woman writer? The richness of a writer depends to some extent on the society he or she writes about.

She said, "There is a lot behind it, the life of the state. There is the great variety of the peoples who came and settled the different sections. There is a great awareness of that as you get older—you see what things have stemmed from. The great thing taught me here as a writer is a sense of continuity. In a place that hasn't changed much, you get to know the generations. You can see the whole narrative of a town's history or a family's history."

JUST as it is hard to comprehend American distances and the heat of the Southern summer until one has experienced them, so in Mississippi and in the city of Jackson it was hard to understand that people of seventy had lived through many different worlds: that the childhoods of solid citizens would have left memories of frontier life, primitive conditions, and closed communities—things hard now to recapture.

The town of Eupora, in the hills to the east of the Delta, is now on Highway 82. But someone like Judge Robert Perkins Sugg, who was born in 1916, and retired from the state supreme court in 1983, carries memories from his childhood, of the time when the Big Black River near Eupora had no bridge, only a ford, so that when the river was high there was no means of crossing it, except in a rowboat, and people stayed where they were, in their little communities, until the water subsided.

"We had dirt roads," Judge Sugg said. "No electricity. I've seen all sorts of wonderful things happen in the world. I enjoy the luxury of modern civilization. Instant television, instant entertainment. Instant everything. I enjoy it all. Life was hard for us in the early days. At the end of the Civil War, we were destitute. And the slaves who had been freed had no training. It has taken us a hundred years to rebuild our capital base. Our slaves had no capital. We were an agricultural state."

Dates are relative. To me, 1890, if I apply it to a place like Trinidad, and apply it, therefore, to the time when my Indian ancestors were just migrating to the New World—to me, that date belongs to a period of darkness, something mythical, very far away. Apply it to England, and I think of the modern world: Oscar Wilde; the young Kipling; Gandhi (four years younger than Kipling) studying law in London. In the South, dates became relative in this way. And I understood that many of the people of a certain age whom one saw had a special kind of success story to tell. Many of them had started with very little, had started in the wilderness, perhaps with only an idea of civilization. (Many of them would have started with as little as my grandparents in Trinidad, but—a further relativity—they had found themselves in a place of greater potential.)

"Everybody was poor," the Judge continued. "I was fortunate. My father was a merchant. He was also sheriff for one term. He ran a general-merchandise store. Merchants lent to farmers. They furnished the merchandise to the farmers, and at the end of the year, when the farmers sold their crops—mainly cotton—they settled. If there was a bad year, the merchants suffered with the farmers, because if the farmers couldn't pay, the merchants couldn't collect. There was nothing in writing, no promissory notes or anything. The saying was 'My word is my bond.' "

A success story for the Judge. But for his ancestors in the seventy or eighty years before his birth, it had been a life with little movement forward.

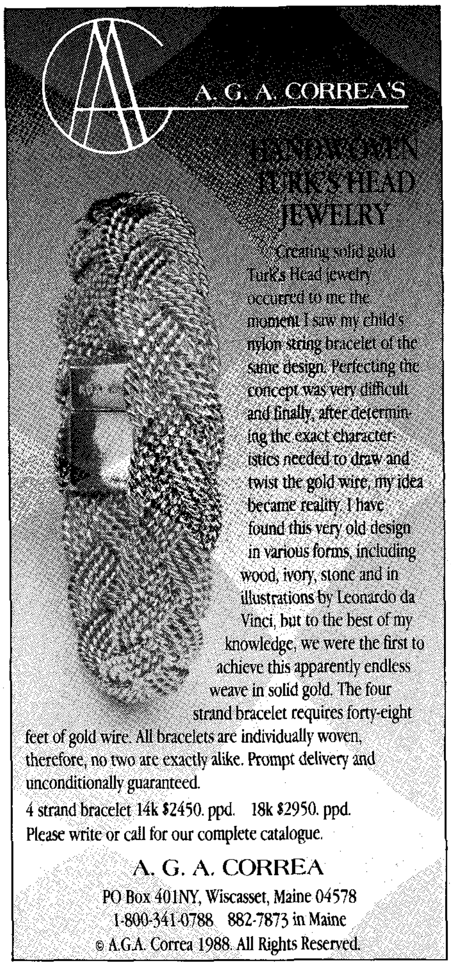
"My family on both sides came to Mississippi between 1830 and 1840. My Sugg grandfather lost his leg in the Civil War. He could barely read and write. When he came out, he saw that a one-legged man couldn't make a living as a farmer. He went to school for three years, and then taught school for several years. Then he became treasurer of Calhoun County for four years and chancery clerk of Webster County for four years. He bought a farm. He had seven children who grew to adulthood, and some tenant families. The tenants were black—some of them former slaves. I was up there about ten years ago, and I met some old people who were descendants of the tenants my grandfather had. When I left Webster County, about a third of the people were black. I'm a country boy, you know. I haven't become accustomed to living in the city yet.

"Once a year, a tent would come. They called them chautauquas. They would stay about a week in the town. They would have musical programs, sometimes a man would lecture, and you would have plays, dramas. That was our outside entertainment. They came in by train. That was the only way they could come. On Sunday afternoon, a passenger train came through. We had four a day. But on Sunday at two-thirty we had a passenger train that went east. A third of the town would go down to the station to see the train, to see who was on the train and who was getting off, and who was leaving town. Everybody just had a big time—that was something to look forward to.

"I remember when I was real young we received word that the Ringling Brothers circus was going to come through sometime after midnight. About half the town got up to get to see the circus train go through. You could see we were hurting for entertainment. It was over a hundred cars—that's what it seemed like at the time."

In contrast to the Delta, where there were rich and poor and caste or class distinctions, in the hills there were no social distinctions except between black and white.

"We didn't have private schools. Everybody went to church. We didn't have a society section. We didn't have a social register. We were just people. We had lots of illiterate whites. In the Depression, we had only six months of school for one year; at other times, we had eight months. There just wasn't the money to pay the teachers. Formal education suffered. But many of the older people were self-educated, like my father. He wrote a



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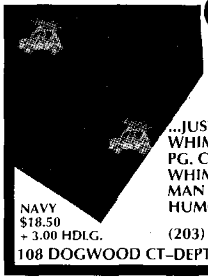

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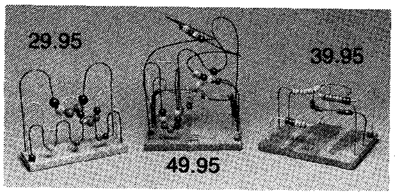

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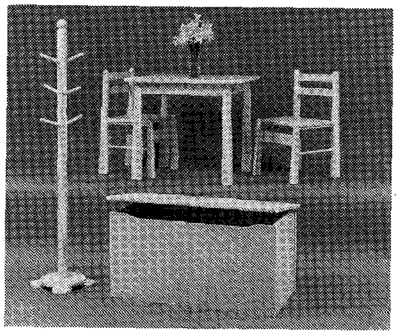

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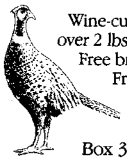

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beautiful hand. He used good English.

"I had a desire to look at things I had read about. New York to me was just on the map. I just never dreamed I would go there. I knew that China was across the Pacific, and Europe across the Atlantic. I never dreamed I would go to these places. Yes, I dreamed of it, but I didn't think it would become a reality.

"But most people were content to remain where they were. We were a close-knit group of people. We had only about thirteen, fourteen hundred people in the town. The only way you could go anywhere was by rail, and you couldn't keep a secret in a place like that.

"I believe that closeness is responsible for some of the Mississippi character. When you live that close to people, you have to get on with them, or you'll be ostracized. You learn to accept people as they are. We had many eccentrics, rugged individualists. A friend of mine said the other day, 'We don't seem to produce characters like we used to.' I said, 'We're the characters now.' "

The closeness of that community, deprived and ill-educated, led to violence. People mightn't feel the need for promissory notes and mightn't lock their doors—mightn't even have keys for some of the doors—but tempers could be quick. There were homicides, crimes of passion.

"They would just get angry, get into an argument, lose their temper. Some of them would be drunk. They would maybe be quarrelling and have a fight, and somebody would get killed. They were slow to arouse, but when you get somebody like that angry somebody would get hurt. Otherwise, helpful people, lovely people."

Self-reliance was another aspect of that Mississippi country character.

"We had two and a half acres of land behind the house. To work that requires hard work. It makes you recognize the fact that anything you want you have to work for. And it's tied in to religion, because we were taught in the churches that work was honorable and you were not to be lazy and you shouldn't be reliant on other people for a livelihood. In the Book of Proverbs, there are many references to work and discipline and reward."

So there it was again—the idea of religion threaded into the idea of the pioneer past.

"I guess I was about the third or fourth generation from the pioneers. I guess some of it still remained. But I wasn't too conscious of it. When I think back to my childhood, it reminds me of what I read about countries that are emerging. They are just beginning, some of them, to realize they can have a better life, but they will have to begin with what they have, and that takes education and training. This country was built on hard work.

"Not long ago, I went on a trip—my wife and I—to Arizona. I had been there before. The desert country has an appeal, with the openness of the space. We drove around for four days. And I got to thinking about the first people who went and settled Arizona, and the difficult times they had crossing canyons, rivers, finding water, and protecting themselves from the Indians who were unfriendly—not all were, but some were. And I'm just thankful that I live in a country that has a heritage of people who are willing to look beyond the horizon and catch a vision of opening up new country for others to enjoy a better life.

"I think religion had a great part to play in the pioneer spirit. Because, in the pioneer spirit, at the back of the mind, you know you are going to make things better for the generations to follow. Part of the motivation for that would come from religion. I think they are so closely intertwined you couldn't separate them."

The frontier, nature, faith, work, the contract with other men—in Judge Sugg's world picture the ideas were as knitted together as they were in the world picture of William, the businessman. The Baptist faith made both men complete, each in his own way. But Judge Sugg had also been led by his faith and his past (the two things almost one) to an unlikely compassion—for black people, who had formed thirty per cent of the population of his little home town.

"I grew up with blacks that I knew intimately, played with—many blacks my own age. And I thought that they were for the most part a deeply spiritual people. After our church was over, we used to go to the black churches on Sunday night and stand outside to listen to them sing, and also to see. We enjoyed hearing and seeing them. I remember an old black man we called Uncle Steve—I don't remember his last name. He played a tambourine. And many times it was the only accompaniment, but it was enough. You could hardly stand still hearing the songs. Many of the songs they made up. Those songs have a great message."

So it must make him unhappy, what had happened to the blacks in the cities, and in Jackson?

He said, "Being black is not the reason. There are also many whites in that position. The reason is they don't have any spiritual values. Somebody asked Jesus one time what the greatest commandment was. The first one was 'Love God.' The second was 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' And that to me is the effect of Christian principles applied daily."

Mississippi's reputation for violence toward blacks was deserved, Judge Sugg said. "Especially in the nineteen-sixties, many people were unwilling to acknowledge that black people had the same rights and privileges as people of other colors. I think this was a holdover from the days of slavery, when the blacks were servants and were looked upon as property, not people. And we white people have got to recognize the fact that God loves *everybody*."

I told him about a conversation I'd had with the Chief Judge of the South Carolina Court of Appeals. That judge had said that the change of heart in the South, the acceptance by white people of black people's rights, might have had a divine cause.

Judge Sugg said, "I believe that God has to create a change of heart—from our adhering to the principles I have mentioned. He has set up the principles there, and I have to accept them. He didn't strike me with a bolt of lightning and say, 'Hey, son, love that black man.' Remember that I grew up in a society where black people were not permitted to enter your front door. They were servants. I had to do some soul-searching."

"When did you start doing that?"

"Early. Before the sixties. And I finally came to the conclusion that when he said 'Love your neighbor as yourself'—I came to the conclusion that the black man was your neighbor, too. And I believe I've overcome ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent of the attitudes someone would have growing up in a society of white supremacists. Well, here, again, I haven't had any bolt of lightning. It's been a slow, steady acceptance of the truth that's been with us since the world began. For example, I am now teaching a black man to read and write. He's thirty-nine years old. I count him as one of my friends. We go fishing together. He went to school through the eighth grade, but he lived in a rural community. His father was a farmer. So when school started in September he had to stay at home and pick cotton, gather the corn and other crops. So that by the time he finally entered the school, in November, all the books had been given out, and he just sat in class. From time to time, he had to miss school to cut firewood. Had to drop out in the spring to prepare the land for planting. The result was he didn't go to school for half the school year. He could read a little, write a little, but not enough to function in our society. He is a good man; he has a good job. He works hard. He is deeply religious, married, with three children. Illiterate people are not dumb. Most of them have real good minds."

When he was sixty, and was still a judge, he had taken a Baptist workshop in the teaching of English as a second language. He had done so with his wife's encouragement.

This was how Judge Sugg touched on the work that had been occupying his retirement: the teaching of English to illiterate people and to "internationals." He said, "I regard it as religious work. It gives me an opportunity to share my faith with the people I teach. The Christian faith is built on the great principle that we have to help our fellow-man."

There was a moving symmetry to the Judge's career. The man who had grown up in an isolated, inward-looking community had now, in his busy retirement, found a mission. His faith had seen him through all the changes in his circumstances. At every moment, his faith had been part of the completeness of his world. —V. S. NAIPAUL

(*This is the second part of a three-part article.*)

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GASPS WE DOUBT EVER GOT GASPED

[*From "Poland," by James A. Michener*]

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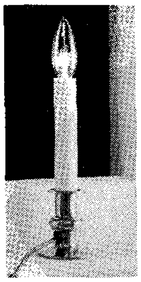

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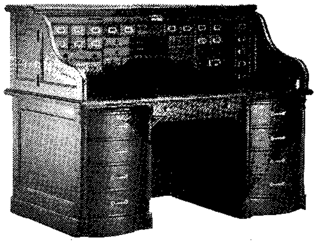

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

What's Wrong with This Picture?

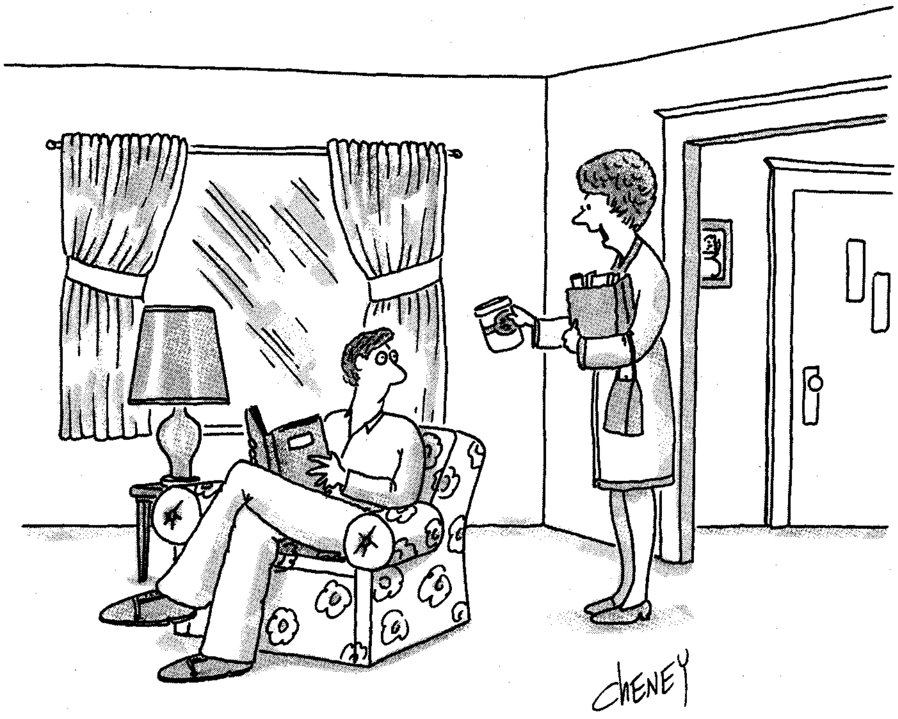
NOT so long ago, Woody Allen movies were awaited with joy; then he began to make tasteful versions of Ingmar Bergman pictures. He has a new one, "Another Woman," and— Well, I didn't much care for "Wild Strawberries" the first time. (An homage, according to Peter Stone, is a plagiarism that your lawyer tells you is not actionable.) Cast in the Victor Sjöström role, Gena Rowlands is Marion, the cold, cerebral professor looking back over her life and realizing that she missed the boat: a fearful, prudent careerist, she lost out on passion, on motherhood, on life itself. (Does she also lack passion for her work? We're not told, but it's implied.)

The opening music, Satie's "Gymnopédie No. 3," is like the soothing Vangelis arrangements that are used in commercials for Gallo wines—music that's selected because it couldn't upset the most delicate sensibilities. (It has the qualities of a digestif.) The audience laughs, taking the wine-country connection to be a joke. It's a jump ahead of Woody Allen, who must be so secluded from the world of commercials that he didn't anticipate the reaction. He has become so conventional in his tastes that this genteel slumber-party music is his idea of an artistic prelude.

The story has a more intricate design than that of Allen's "Interiors" or "September." Just turned fifty, the firm-minded Marion, philosophy professor and director of undergraduate studies at "a fine women's college," has taken a year off to write a book and has sublet a second apartment, to work in. But "reality" leaks through: voices invade her sanctuary. They're the voices of an analyst's patients, coming through the air vent from the office next door. And she becomes obsessed with one voice—that of the tearful, distraught, and hugely pregnant Hope (Mia Farrow). Marion spies on her, follows her around Manhattan, and manages to meet her. Hope's confused feelings awaken Marion to all the risk-taking she has put out of her orderly life: as if by magic, she begins to encounter people she used to know and to flash back to scenes from her past.

Woody Allen has become an accomplished craftsman, and he moves around a large group of Marion's intertwined friends and relatives in the past and the present. The cast includes, among many others, Blythe Danner, Sandy Dennis, Martha Plimpton, Gene Hackman, Ian Holm, Harris Yulin, Philip Bosco, Kenneth Welsh, Bruce Jay Friedman, and John Houseman and David Ogden Stiers playing Marion's father in his later years and when she was still a young woman. (Stiers' voice matches up with Houseman's.) Every detail is in place, from Sven Nykvist's pristine, mellow images to Gena Rowlands' designer writing ensembles and her distinguished-woman hairdo—the braided knot on the back of her head looks as if it had been cast in bronze. And Marion's voice-overs keep briefing us. The movie is so lucidly constructed it's like a diagram of all the characters' relations to each other. It's fluid even during Allen's flourishes—when, for example, the older Marion talks across time to her brother Paul as a young man, or when Marion dreams that she's at the rehearsal of a play about her life. The basic units, though, are Bergman scenes: Marion's aged father expresses regret that his wife was not the woman he loved most deeply, and remorse at how he treated Marion and her brother; there's speculation about whether Marion's first husband committed suicide; Marion's second husband's first wife interrupts a party to denounce him; Marion wants to know why she and this second husband don't have sex anymore; and so on. And Marion's wet, suffering eyes speak of her misery over what she now recognizes has been a sterile existence, in which she has been judgmental about everyone but herself. (She is psychoanalyzed by overhearing the pregnant woman on the analyst's couch.)

Quiet as it is, this is a soaringly ambitious movie; it's clearly intended as a celebration of Allen's becoming a father (it's his child that Mia Farrow is carrying) and as an assertion of a new commitment to life, in all its passionate messiness. Yet, except for a few scenes where the performers' individuality stirs the surface (Hackman, in tip-top form, sneaks in a hint of eroticism; Sandy Dennis lets loose with bursts of smudgy, chaotic anger; Martha Plimpton has her laconic, easygoing freshness; and Blythe Danner hugs herself, wrapping her long fingers around her skinniness like an American Maggie Smith), nothing in the movie has the slightest resonance. Bergman's version had at least a mysterious sensuality and raw, gothic images and great disturb-



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ing faces that helped you over the banalities and stayed in the memory. Woody Allen's picture is meant to be about emotion, but it has no emotion. It's smooth and high-toned; it's polished in its nothingness.

When Marion, upset, sits down alone and, in voice-over, tells us, "I thumbed through my mother's edition of Rilke," what universe are we in? (One where this isn't recognized as a line to hoot at.) Woody Allen may identify with Marion's new desire for release, but he's filming a delusionary world derived from books, plays, and movies, where stick figures accuse each other of betrayals, infidelities, lack of courage—and it's all weightless. Marion talks of Rilke's black panther, his symbol of death; and a white mask is displayed—we're told it's from a performance of "La Gioconda." The pregnant woman is named Hope, which is also the title of a Klimt painting of a pregnant nude exhibited for us; Brecht is referred to, and Kurt Weill is performed in an enervated version. Marion, who has been in love with order but realizes it's death and now finds Hope, belongs to a whole race of cultured zombies.

This is the seventeenth film that Woody Allen (in his early fifties now) has written and directed; it's easy to believe that, like Marion, he has trained himself to be overdisciplined. The evidence is here in this howlingly groomed production, which is intended to represent a movement toward liberation but was made by a man who doesn't even accept his own humor. A viewer of all Woody Allen's movies—the comedies and the vacuous dramas—may conclude that he misstates his problem in "Another Woman." You can see in his comedies that he associates messy emotions with Jewishness and foolishness and laughter. But he wants to escape all that and be a "serious" dignified artist, so he sets his dramas in an austere Gentile world. And then what is the protagonist's tight-nostrilled anguish about? Being repressed. Being a perfectionist. Not being emotional enough. That was the interior-decorator mother's soul-sickness in "Interiors," and it's Marion's soul-sickness here. Woody Allen is caught in his own Catch-22: his protagonist's problem is not being Jewish.

"Another Woman" was made by an upscale control freak. Even the workplace Marion sublets is in impeccable taste. The soundtrack music is Bach and Mahler with popular classics in arrangements that seem modulated to go with the carpeting. The only bright side to all this is that, having reached a peak of self-rejection, Allen shouldn't need to go any further in this direction. If there's a tragic waste in his career, it's that he doesn't place a high enough value on his own talent; he labors to be an artist like Bergman and turns into a pseud. If he could just stop dichotomizing himself between "funny" Allen and "serious" Allen! Maybe even Marion would recognize that life includes cracking a joke now and then, and letting in a little rock 'n' roll. How can you embrace life and leave out all the good vulgar trashiness?

STANDUP comics appear to come from several groups: bright, verbal children who clamor for the attention they didn't get from their families; bright, verbal "born comics," the family pets who made everyone laugh until their indefatigability drove everyone nuts (the pets clamor for more of the attention they did get); and other kids —maybe adolescents, or even adults— who fall in love with comedy. It comes pretty much to the same thing. They all find a way to remain kids forever: they turn their talkativeness and their intense, exaggerated reactions into entertainment. It's the handiest vehicle for their hyper-responsiveness. They turn it into routines because what else can you do with it? Well, David Seltzer, who wrote and directed "Punchline," found something else he could do with it: turn it into pop-psych moral uplift and sell it.

Seltzer wants us to see the blistering young comic Steven Gold (Tom Hanks) as "troubled." Seltzer points up Steven's hostility, his inability to relate to other people, his not understanding what love is. And everything that Seltzer points up is soggy and only partway believable. (He's the Gail Sheehy of moviemakers.) Some sharp, high-energy comics may have had a tantrummy smartass childhood, but as the kids' childhood experiences became stylized acts they took on a satirical, self-lampooning tone. And if the kids became jazz artists of language and let loose their imaginations we might hear our own kookiest buried thoughts spring out of their mouths. Or maybe even—as with Mel Brooks—hear sprightly thoughts more cockeyed than we'd ever dreamed of. When touched-in-the-head—gifted—comics like Robin Williams or Andrea Martin (or Woody Allen) take flight, they're emancipated from sanity. So why does Seltzer present the gifted Steven Gold as one of the hundred neediest cases? Because pathos serves Seltzer's purposes, and zest doesn't.

Hanks convinces you that Steven *has* to be a comic; he can't be anything else—or, at least, there's nothing else that he wants to be. Somehow, the movie uses this against him. Whiplash-smart and manic, Steven works out at several places each day and night; his home base is the Manhattan club the Gas Station, where he earns fifteen dollars a show plus chits for drinks at the bar. He lives on the money his doctor father sends him for medical school, but—and here's the Seltzer touch—Steven can't go on with his studies, because even though he might make an excellent doctor he's squeamish about blood. He's a tortured fellow—compulsive, restless, derisive. But Lilah (Sally Field) sees the soft, suffering child within. She's a New Jersey housewife and mother of three who hopes to become a comic, and she wears what I guess is meant to be an all-purpose, practical coat. It's plaid, with some frowzy animal around the neck, and it makes her look like a toby jug three feet high. Every time she put on that grotesque coat, I could feel my gut tightening; her coat began to stand for everything that's wrong with the movie.

As Seltzer presents the story, audiences warm to Lilah because she has a wholesome, normal outlook; Lilah incarnates what Steven has been denied, and the movie gives her an insipid radiance while it pulls back from Steven's aggressive twisted smile and his stabbing vocal rhythms. (These two are Lenny Bruce and Erma Bombeck.) Essentially, the movie pulls back from its own subject—standup comics. Sally Field has an almost scary plaintive look in some scenes, but the movie never gets very far into why Lilah is running around buying jokes. We're supposed to dislike Steven's brashness and desperation, and approve of Lilah because she's decent and only temporarily driven. This is the kind of movie in which Lilah's husband in Jersey is tender and wise when he says,

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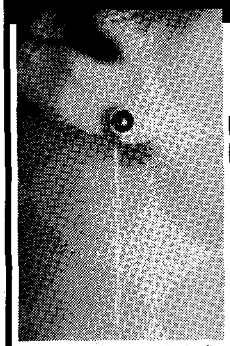

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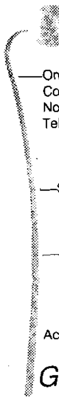

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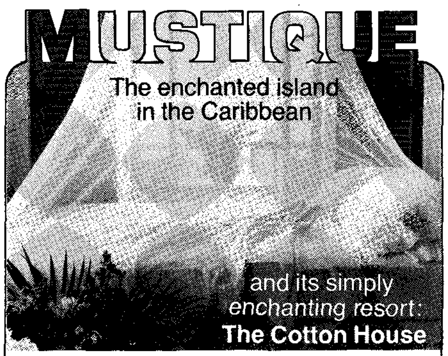
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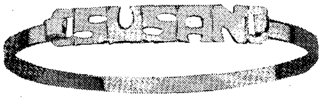

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"Someday, Lilah . . . you'll remember that the people in this house loved you whether you were funny or not."

You can't have much respect for a writer-director who falls back on the plot device of a contest to be held at the Gas Station—the winner will get a shot on the Johnny Carson show. (Is this a Muppet movie?) And Seltzer employs tricks that used to jerk tears, like having the cheerful, raucous act that Steven performs for the patients in a hospital—the one routine where he comes across as a man being funny and not a wiseguy—end with his slipping away to speak comfortingly to a dying child. The bedraggled plotting forces Hanks into maudlin situations. Steven gets up to perform, sees his father and brother at a table, and falls apart: he talks slowly, fumblingly about his childhood humiliations until he's led offstage. Lilah follows him out, and he weeps on her shoulder. This is the low point of the movie; it comes to a halt, and Hanks can't save himself, maybe because the breakdown doesn't have any nuances—it's not grounded in anything believable. In another scene, Steven and Lilah are in a diner, and he, euphoric about his feelings for her, urges her to pack up her children and come to him, and they'll get married. (He doesn't even have a place for her to come to; he has been locked out of his apartment.) She tells him that she loves her husband; anguished, he says he has nothing to keep him going without her, and he walks outside into a downpour, la-la-ing the beginning of "Singin' in the Rain," and dancing and miming a long takeoff of Gene Kelly's solo, with Kelly's blissfulness converted into self-dramatizing bitterness and dejection. When his dance is over, he stands in the rain looking back at her for an instant of formal eye contact before he disappears from the frame. Hanks performs this number with such physical grace that he transcends the banality of the idea and outclasses "Punchline."

Sally Field, Hollywood's queen of vulnerability, is too skillful at what she does; she seems used up, as if she'd hit her limits a long way back. (It's almost inconceivable that she once had the range to play the fractured identities of "Sybil.") She doesn't find anything to reveal to us, and her plucky darlingness is a blight on this movie. To be more exact, it's the picture that's a blight, because Seltzer's sitcom style of hu-

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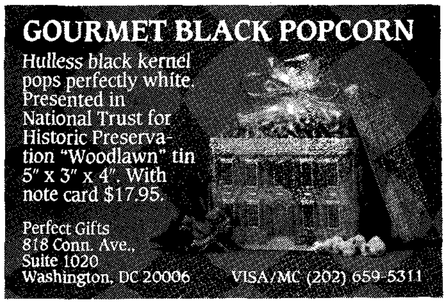

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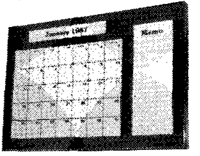

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mor is just like Lilah's. When she learns how to perform and does her act, we're supposed to be charmed by the naughty vibrator jokes that pop out of her little head and "embarrass" her. And we're supposed to see what a blooming, healthy, *nice* person she is. The truth of Steven's character is supposed to be the hurt, not the comedy; understanding this, she knows that he needs to win the contest more than she does. This shabby plot even undercuts Steven's final routine, which begins bewilderingly.

Field is lucky to have John Goodman, as Lilah's insurance-salesman husband, to carry her. Goodman's cheeks and chest have become huge, and his role is heavy and domineering at the beginning; but about midway Lilah changes her hairdo from soft, red, and long to a tightly curled brunette bob (is she imitating Steven?), and she's flustered about what she has done, and is on the verge of tears—and then her husband intercepts, sets her at ease, and we see a different side to him. Right there, Goodman takes over. The conception of the insurance man as the rock that Lilah cleaves to is no more than a plot convenience, but Goodman makes him into a grinning, big-souled character with a happy boom of a laugh. His love of her makes her look substantial instead of just cute-as-a-bug, and the gleam in his eyes when she's performing saves the creaking last scenes.

As a network scout who praises Steven but doesn't take the risk of recommending him, Kim Greist (of "Brazil") has the TV functionary's sexy manner down pat. And Mark Rydell, as the baby-faced owner of the Gas Station, is eager, self-serving, and almost iridescent in his sleaziness. During the contest, when he's onstage as the m.c., you expect to see a diamond in his eyetooth; he's so proud and excited he's like an enraptured gnome.

It's Hanks, stretching his light comedian's skills, who keeps you watching. While Steven the cutting-edge comic may be written to be nothing but the tears behind the laughter, Hanks gets under the material, and darkens it. Steven reaches out to Lilah because she's a mommy; he knows he's a nit to want a mommy—it's his awareness that keeps him racing. When Lilah's husband comes into the club, Steven looks at him with jealousy and anger; this kid knows what turns him on in a sick way—he's a comic, he's on top of what bothers him. And he's so manic he doesn't know how he's going to take his next breath. Steven is most alive when he's spritzing and not quite in control; I'd like to have heard him do a jeering riff on a few targets that were at hand, like the film's perky score and Lilah-the-housewife's kitchen that's lighted like a margarine commercial and the inserts of onscreen audiences beaming at Lilah's wholesome humor, and don't forget the plaid coat.

SHIRLEY MACLAINE is outrageously miscast in John Schlesinger's "Madame Sousatzka." As a flamboyant, grande-dame piano teacher, of Russian lineage, she glints her eyes and pinches her tiny lips, she tromps around in layers of clothes and ropes of beads, whirling her velvet cloak. MacLaine seems to have entered the Simone Signoret sweepstakes, but she doesn't project Signoret's generosity—she doesn't spill over emotionally. MacLaine has flurries of physical mannerisms, but she's tight and held in; she's a wacky witch with frizzy red hair—she could be Norma Desmond's small-town spinster sister.

The movie accounts for her Americanness by having her raised in New York, where her performing career was wrecked long ago by her dragon of a virtuoso mother; she lives in London now (in an Edwardian house that is to be demolished) and devotes her energies and her hopes to the most prodigious of her students, a fifteen-year-old Indian boy raised in England, Manek Sen (Navin Chowdhry). Autocratic old Sousatzka battles with the boy's beautiful young mother (Shabana Azmi) and tries to take him over completely, and, still traumatized from her own failed début, she refuses to let him perform in public. The movie is about the boy's breaking free of her, though he knows he'll remain in her debt forever. Changing Manek from the Jewish boy of the 1962 novel, by Bernice Rubens, works fine, but Sousatzka seems to belong to an earlier era than that of the poised, often amused Manek. Chowdhry, who has impressive, big features in an intelligent face, gives you the sense of how he feels about his developing powers, and he's fun when he knows to ignore Sousatzka's bullying. It's a likable, well-directed performance. And the beautiful Shabana Azmi, who acts a lit-

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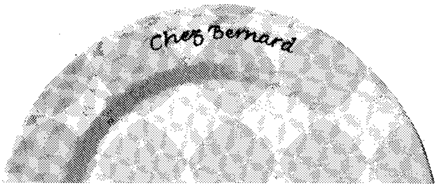

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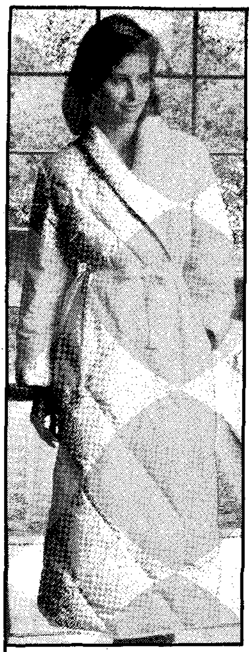

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tle broadly, like a Bengali Jane Seymour, makes you understand her near-hysteria when she has to deal with Sousatzka. The best scenes in the movie show how Manek and his mother live, and the perils of their catering business; there's a wonderful image of Hindu women piled together in a tiny room watching daytime TV.

The script, by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and Schlesinger, is blindingly derivative but thoughtfully worked out. The conflict between teacher and pupil takes place among Chekhovian intimations of life going on among the tenants of the doomed building: Peggy Ashcroft is Lady Emily, the impoverished landlady; Geoffrey Bayldon is an elderly homosexual osteopath; and Twiggy, who gives an appealingly understated performance, is an aspiring pop singer who isn't getting anywhere, except into the beds of artists' reps and record producers. (Manek, who adores her, pleads with her to take him into her bed.)

The movie has excerpts from musical classics, and a tense scene where the boy makes his début playing the Schumann Piano Concerto and we're alerted that he won't get through it unscathed. The musical community may regard the picture as a treasure. Schlesinger is a professional at mounting a production; it's handsome and textured and reasonably dynamic, and for some people it may serve as the "Red Shoes" of the keyboard. But the core performance is missing. You'd think that, with all those past lives to draw on, MacLaine could come up with a crazily noble, dedicated music lover—an inspiring tyrant—rather than this rouged and tarted-up hollow old crank. MacLaine's Sousatzka has no Old World charm and no New World charm, either. And, without a big, maddening personality to irradiate it, the movie is like a prestige best-seller from an earlier era. As a viewing experience, it's laborious—not bad but not enjoyably bad, either. It should be projected on the wall while you have a polite lunch at the Russian Tea Room —the wall behind you.

—PAULINE KAEL

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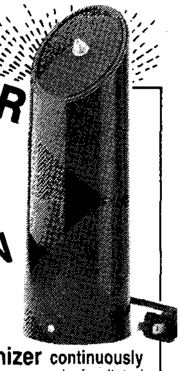

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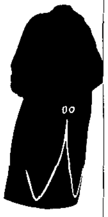

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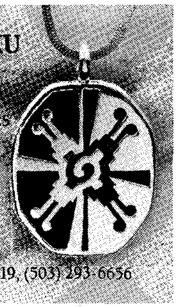

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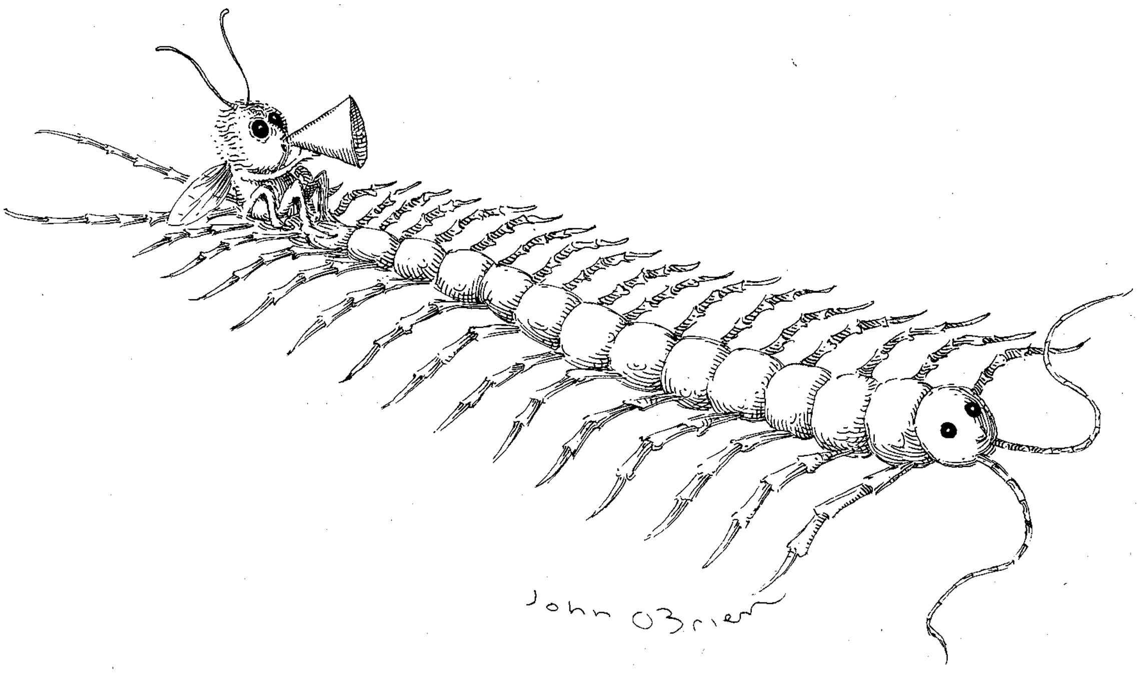
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

OCTOBER 12TH. As the Presidential election entered its final weeks, the Dukakis campaign believed that its candidate had little time left to do something that would give his candidacy a liftoff, and the Bush campaign worked to nail down a victory that was still just eluding it. Dukakis's creditable performance in the first Presidential debate hadn't given his candidacy the boost his people felt it needed, nor had Lloyd Bentsen's wipeout of Dan Quayle in the Vice-Presidential debate—though the latter did help. Many people think, rightly or wrongly, that tomorrow night's debate will settle the thing. As Dukakis continued to struggle to find his voice, to give his candidacy some overarching theme and purpose—and as his advisers and supporters continued to wait for him to do something exciting—Bush continued to campaign as the man who wants "a kinder and gentler nation" but is also ready to smear his opponent and play on people's fears. Neither man has worked his way into the hearts of the American people—and a great many voters remain undecided. But one of them will have to try to lead the nation after this.

Neither the Dukakis nor the Bush camp was satisfied with where it stood at the beginning of October. Though Dukakis and his people believed he had "won" the first debate—and most polls bore this out—he was unable to capitalize on his victory. The problem was that poll after poll—including the Dukakis camp's own polls—showed that people didn't like him. His frosty, arrogant-seeming manner put people off. Bush may have mangled a number of things he was trying to say, but he came across as the nicer guy—which he essentially is. (But the kind of campaign he has lent himself to raises serious questions about him.) The Bush people had hoped to have the election, for all intents and purposes, put away by early October—to convince the press and the public that it was over—but Dukakis was still standing. Though he was behind by small margins in the national matchups, and though a number of the states, particularly in the South and the West, that usually go Republican were beginning to fall into place for Bush, giving him an electoral-college advantage, almost all the big states remained up for grabs. The electoral college is weighted in favor of the small states, and the old Democratic base in the industrial states is no longer reliable. The Dukakis people knew that they had to tighten the race soon, that his candidacy had to "accelerate," or any chance of victory would get beyond their reach.

Dukakis was up against four problems: Bush, through a combination of unrelenting attacks and smears, had succeeded in painting him to many people as a woolly liberal out of touch with the mainstream; Dukakis's attacks on Bush lacked punch; his positive message was still vague; and people didn't much like him. Obviously, some of these problems were easier to deal with than others. In early October, he began to sharpen his attacks on Bush, saying, in a speech at Northwestern University, that he had "failed" his "missions" to deal with drugs, terrorism, trade relations with Japan, the banking system, and deregulation. Trying to get people to again think of Bush as weak—a perception that Bush, by his rough campaign and improved style, had done much to overcome—Dukakis said, "If Mr. Bush couldn't stand up to the Ayatollah, if he couldn't stand up to Noriega, if he couldn't stand up to Japan, if he couldn't stand up to the special interests, why should anyone believe he'll stand up for the economic future of this country?" But Dukakis's argument, like others he makes, was a bit recondite—requiring the processing of a fair amount of information—as opposed to reaching people at a gut level, which Bush, for better or for worse, does. Dukakis also tried to walk the line between saying that things can be better and appearing to "downgrade" America—a charge that Republicans have developed against Democrats when they say that things can be better. Pointing to the decline in the United States' share of the world market for such things as color televisions and telephones, Dukakis said, "Cite these facts and George Bush will say you're downgrading America. . . . My friends, if we disregard these facts, we endanger America." In any event, few people heard much—or any—of Dukakis's speech, because the networks gave it little coverage. (CBS gave it none.) Dukakis, moreover, isn't big on repetition; he seems to believe that once he's made a point it's been made, whereas the Bush campaign understands that politics requires repetition—lots of it.

Also in early October, Dukakis began to refine his "positive" message, and he and his campaign settled on the theme "The best America is yet to come." Dukakis had been saying this before, and repeated it in his closing statement in the first Presidential de-



bate. It was settled on in part because it expressed optimism, goals, standards, and even a little nationalism (Dukakis also says, "We can make America number one again"), and in part because the Dukakis people hadn't been able to come up with anything else. They hadn't found a sharp way to communicate the idea of the "middle-class squeeze" Dukakis was addressing himself to, and hoped that through his programmatic proposals people would see that he has ideas for helping the middle class. But the programs, as some Dukakis people realize, while giving the messenger some validity, can't substitute for people's having confidence in the messenger, and a large sense of where he wants to take the country. The Dukakis people continued to rely on enough people's deciding in the end that they are not satisfied with their economic situation or prospects and that they want change. This has been, in fact, Dukakis's only hope. The Dukakis camp's optimism of last summer that it would be no big problem to paint Bush as out of touch with mainstream America has been delivered a double whammy—by Bush. Also, there are some things that Dukakis won't do. He has resisted being the populist some around him would like—in part because he isn't a populist. Though he has partially yielded to entreaties to make economic nationalism a major theme, he has been unwilling to go as far in the direction of xenophobia as some of his advisers would like.

In Hartford, on October 3rd, Dukakis set forth his domestic message more sharply and coherently than before, contrasting his proposals to Bush's and saying that Bush "doesn't understand" the concerns of the middle class: "He says everything's fine, not to worry. But ask yourself this: Could your children buy the house they grew up in? Can they finance a college education without mountains of debt when they graduate? Is your family really getting ahead—or is it just running in place or even falling behind?" He said, "Mr. Bush offers complacency, I offer change." He talked about America's losing its competitive edge in the classroom, the workplace, and in the world economy, saying, "I want us to take charge of our future—to make America the best that it can be." He said that the national debt and foreign debt had led to foreign investment in our plants, our land, and our bonds, and that "unless we can take charge of our future our children will be unable to enjoy the same standard of living as their parents, and they'll have to deal with burdens of debt and decline that we're putting on their shoulders." That our debts have made us increasingly dependent on foreign capital to finance them is true enough, but the amount of foreign investment in our industries has not been so great—especially as compared with United States investment abroad—or as threatening as some political rhetoric suggests. And he continued, "That's what this election is all about. Will we look to the past and be satisfied with what some of us now have, or will we look toward a future of opportunity and hope, not just for some of our citizens but for all Americans—in every part of this country?" At least, that's what Dukakis would like the election to be about. As it happened, Dukakis's speech received no mention on the three major television networks, for he gave it on the same day the space shuttle Discovery returned to earth—with Bush on hand at Edwards Air Force Base, in California, to greet the astronauts—and a hostage was released by his captors in Lebanon.

Outside events have been breaking well for Bush. The shuttle flight, nearly three years after the explosion of the Challenger, was invested with much emotion, anxiety, and pride, and was widely hailed as a national triumph. The release of the hostage—an Indian national who holds a United States residence permit and had been held along with three others who had been teaching at Beirut University College—seemed an affirmation of the possibility that Americans still held hostage in Lebanon (there are nine of them) might be released before the election. With the cessation of the Iran-Iraq war, the United States announced that it would begin to withdraw some ships from the Persian Gulf, and at the same time Iran sought to repair relations with Western nations. United States government officials say they are not certain how much leverage Iran has on the various groups holding hostages, and officials have denied any involvement in negotiating the release of the hostages, but, for obvious reasons, they are having trouble being believed. Bush is also benefitting from the fact that Reagan's popularity has been rising—in part as he becomes a nostalgic figure—reaching about sixty per cent, an unusually high figure, and one he had not enjoyed since just before the Iran-Contra scandal broke, in November, 1986. Reagan is campaigning hard for Bush, especially among "Reagan Democrats." Reagan often appears before young people, with whom he does far better than Quayle.

To try to pull Bush back, diminish the distance between the two candidates, the Dukakis campaign went in for heavy advertising in early October, making a big investment in ads in which actors depicted Bush managers cynically talking about packaging their candidate, and which concluded with the announcer saying, "They'd like to sell you a package. Wouldn't you rather choose a President?" The Dukakis people say their research shows that a significant number of people see Bush as a packaged candidate. But the ads have met with a great deal of criticism by political observers who argue, with some validity, that they are too complicated, that it is difficult to figure out even whose ad it is. The Bush campaign has outgunned the Dukakis campaign on ads; it took the Dukakis people some time to organize a group of commercial and political advertisers to come up with ads (in this it was seeking to emulate the "Tuesday Team" that produced ads for Reagan's 1984 campaign), and meanwhile the Bush campaign, which entrusted the responsibility for ads to Roger Ailes, Bush's media adviser, was on the air with unanswered ads attacking Dukakis on such things as crime and his delay in cleaning up Boston Harbor. Also, the Bush ads each made a simple point, and they were in synch with what Bush was saying, so that his "paid media" and "free media" reinforced each other (which is how it should be), while for much of the time Dukakis's ads were off by themselves and lacked focus—as the Dukakis campaign itself did. Following the Vice-Presidential debate, the Dukakis campaign also ran ads attacking Bush for working to weaken

environmental regulations and for other lapses on the subject of the environment, and for casting a tie-breaking vote in the Senate to cut Social Security benefits. And it ran two tough anti-Quayle ads: one had the handlers discussing whether it was too late to dump Quayle, and the other showed an empty desk chair in the Oval Office and pointed out that one in five Vice-Presidents has had to take over as President. Bush's ads, reflecting the split personality of his campaign, show him playing with his grandchildren or have him saying in his acceptance speech, "I want a kinder and gentler nation," and also go at Dukakis hard about crime, the environment, and his raising taxes in Massachusetts. A Bush ad on the furlough program, showing prisoners going through a revolving door, is very powerful, if misleading in its facts.

Making Dukakis more likable was perhaps the hardest task of all. He is what he is, at least publicly. Because of television, and as a result of Reagan, whether we like a President or not has taken on more importance. Neither Lyndon Johnson nor Richard Nixon was a particularly lovable figure: it was enough that they appeared competent to do the job. But now we seem to want more than competence, or than even a combination of competence, decency, and high intelligence: we want to have a nice time with our President, enjoy his presence in our living rooms, have a very long and pleasant date with him. Dukakis does have qualities that make him hard to take at times, and efforts to mask them or to divert our attention from them will be ultimately futile. His advisers do their best to loosen him up, but it's a struggle: when possible, they have him campaign in rolled-up shirtsleeves, and they feel, rightly, that he comes across warmer when his wife or one of their daughters is around. Ads projecting a warmer Dukakis are ready for after the second Presidential debate, and Dukakis has already begun accepting numerous opportunities to appear in television interviews (opportunities that Bush had turned down) and try to be more relaxed and warmer, and, cutting through the campaign flak, tell people who he is and what he believes in.

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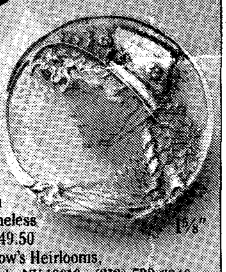

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(which had bothered him quite a bit). The term was never quite fair, but it did bespeak a certain weakness in him —a weakness that, beneath the bluster, is still apparent. A man who will do just about anything his advisers suggest is not a particularly strong one. Bush's aides let it be known from time to time that he insists that his accusations be accurate—even though they often aren't—and that he is troubled by, say, making such an issue of Dukakis's membership in the American Civil Liberties Union. Of course, all he has to do is stop. Two days before the second Presidential debate, Bush, in an interview with the New York *Times*, expressed concern that he was being criticized for running such a negative campaign, and some of his advisers told the *Times* that he didn't really like to be negative. These things do not convey strength; Bush doesn't have to say anything he doesn't want to. Bush is the same person he has been all along —a pleasant guy with some real weaknesses who lacks definition—but his playing the bully seems to have led much, perhaps most, of the public to see him as a mensch. Though people say they don't like negative campaigns, they often work. Bush has even developed an odd and seemingly unnatural body gesture: riding in an open car or standing on a platform accepting the plaudits of the crowd, he flings his arms up and out so that they form a V, making him look like an overage cheerleader.

The Bush campaign has continued its stratagem of mixing positive proposals with the negative attacks in order to fend off criticism for the particularly nasty campaign it has been running, to appeal to independent voters, and to make sure that Dukakis isn't the only one offering enticements to the middle class. At the same time that he offered his proposals, Bush attacked "liberal programs," saying, accurately, that "taking hard-won money from the middle class" and putting it in programs for the poor "caused more resentment than closeness." Several of his proposals are vague, and one of them, a $3.9 billion mélange of programs for children, Bush didn't even bother to outline himself; a fact sheet was distributed to reporters. Another, called YES, for Youth Engaged in Service to America, offered in early October (there was a spate of Bush proposals around then), proposed the spending of a hundred million dollars to encourage public service in the ghettos by high-school children. (A number of Dukakis people were not at all happy that Bush got to this sort of proposal before they did.) Bush's chief of staff, Craig Fuller, told reporters that day that Bush "was uncomfortable with a perception forming that this is a campaign that was not talking about issues as much, because he has been talking about issues." In offering the proposal, Bush said that this was what he meant by the phrase "a thousand points of light." (On another occasion, Bush admitted that when he first saw it in the draft of his acceptance speech he was as baffled as everyone else.) Shortly after his appearance, in Sacramento, in which he made the YES proposal, Bush appeared at a rally in Riverside and attacked Dukakis for being weak on crime.

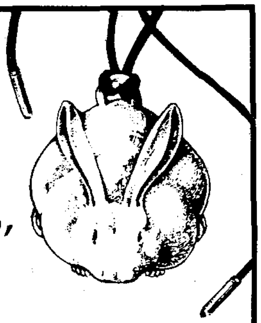
IT was widely understood that a great deal rode on Quayle's performance in the Vice-Presidential debate, in Omaha on October 5th. Dukakis had been making an issue of him, but if he performed adequately the issue could be gone, even if that didn't make him any more qualified for the Vice-Presidency. There was some real concern within the Dukakis camp that Quayle would indeed do adequately and that his youth and vigor would stand in helpful contrast to Bentsen. Both camps went through the usual nonsense of "lowering expectations," and a great deal of suspense was allowed to build once again over a ninety-minute event—a single event that could therefore play a large role in determining the Presidency.

The two most surprising things about the Vice-Presidential debate were that Bentsen was as good as he was and that Quayle was as bad as he was. Bentsen had campaigned competently and surefootedly, but in the debate he showed a command and an assurance as well as an apparent ease that made him the best of the four candidates in these events thus far. Though he clearly was prepared to make certain points, he appeared far less scripted and more natural than any of the other contenders; unlike the others, he conveyed wisdom. Quayle's performance was astonishing—especially given the fact that he has some of the best trainers in the country. But these trainers either permitted or could not prevent Quayle's looking wooden and frightened—like a young man hesitantly reciting his lessons and knowing little else. Quayle had been an effective enough debater in the past, and what could have been expected was that he would come on vigorous (but not too vigorous), assertive, and showing a certain youthful charm. But the pressure of the situation obviously got to him—or he was overcoached—and there were precious few moments in which he appeared the slightest bit relaxed or natural. Bentsen, in sharp contrast, seemed relaxed and natural almost throughout, and though he is no dynamo, and his creased face makes him look older than he is (sixty-seven), he came across as a man we could feel comfortable with in a crisis—which is, of course, the whole point in thinking about potential Vice-Presidents. Quayle looks even younger than he is (forty-one); there is a vacuousness to his pale-blue eyes that adds to the impression of his insubstantiality.

Quayle's flubbing three questions about what he would do should he have to take over the Presidency was symptomatic. He clearly hadn't been prepared for this question, so he persistently gave an answer to one that he had: a recitation of his qualifications—his twelve years in Congress, his service on the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Budget Committee, his sponsorship of a jobs-training bill. He had already given this answer to the opening question—dropping such ten-dollar words as "telemetry" and "encryption" to show his knowledge, but putting the words in no context. Throughout the debate, in fact, Quayle was asserting his qualifications without offering substantive proof of them. The first time he was asked what he would do if he had to take over, he quite hesitantly said he would pray, for himself and for the country, and assemble the President's advisers—and then went on to the twelve years in Congress. The second time, he said, "I don't believe that it's proper for me to get into the specifics of a hypothetical situation like that"—and returned once again to his twelve years in Congress. He also said that he had met with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany: "I know them. They know me." (Quayle met each of them once, for only a few minutes.) The third time he was asked the question, he talked again about his qualifications and also said that he would know the President's top advisers and his Cabinet officers "on a first-hand basis" and would call them in and talk to them. These exchanges were painful to behold, and his inability to think up some form of the right answer—call in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reassure the allies, speak to the American people, perhaps address a joint session of Congress—was baffling.

Of course, Quayle's most painful moment was caused by Bentsen's picking him up on that part of his third answer in which, as he had been doing on the campaign trail, he asserted that he has had as much experience as John Kennedy had when he sought the Presidency. (Bush's top advisers had put forth this argument at the Republican Convention.) As soon as Bentsen gave his withering response, one knew that this would be the most memorable moment of the debate, the one that would be replayed often, and Bentsen delivered his lines with perfect timing. The effectiveness was in the way it was done: Bentsen's saying, more in sorrow, slowly, "Senator, I served with Jack Kennedy." (Pause.) "I knew Jack Kennedy." (Pause.) "Jack Kennedy was a friend of mine." (Longer pause.) "Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy." As Bentsen started to go ahead with what he would do if he had to take over as President, an obviously wounded Quayle said stiffly, and with what seemed more petulance than anger, "That was really uncalled for, Senator." So Bentsen levelled him again, with elegant phrasing: "You're the one that was making the comparison, Senator. . . . I did not think the comparison was well taken." ("Petulant" is a word that a senator who likes Quayle uses to describe him. This person also says that Quayle is more given to argument than compromise, and is known to give Republican colleagues who try to work out compromises a hard time.)

Quayle did his share of attacking Dukakis, saying whenever possible that Dukakis is a liberal, one who would raise taxes and is opposed to the death penalty. (He referred to him as "Tax-Hike Mike.") Quayle suggested that Dukakis might impose "another Jimmy Carter grain embargo." (Dukakis has said he wouldn't.) With



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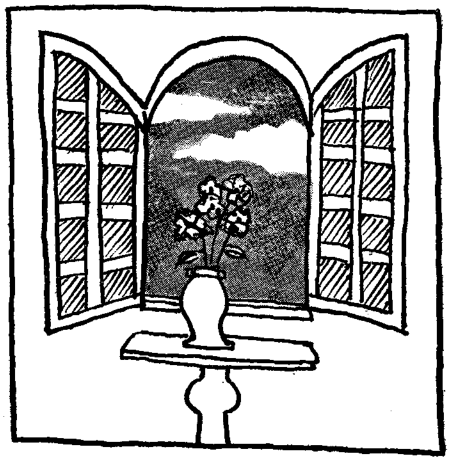
obvious predetermination, he got in digs at Dukakis by taking digs at supporters of Dukakis and Bentsen in the hall. Quayle answered a question about what experience in his life had shaped his political philosophy by telling of his grandmother's saying to him, "You can do anything you want to if you just set your mind to it and go to work," and then, though the hall seemed silent, said, "Now, the Dukakis supporters sneer at that because it's common sense. They sneer at common-sense advice, Midwestern advice from a grandmother to a grandson." He also took a shot at the press, calling himself "the most investigated person ever to seek public office."

Bentsen tried to set the terms of the debate at the outset, saying, "This debate tonight is not about the qualifications for the Vice-Presidency; the debate is whether or not Dan Quayle and Lloyd Bentsen are qualified to be President of the United States." He dealt with questions about his differences with Dukakis—over Contra aid, gun control, the death penalty—by evading them and proceeding to discuss the things that he and Dukakis agree on. He painted Quayle as a right-winger who had opposed child-nutrition programs and money for childhood immunizations and had tried to undermine the I.N.F. agreement. (Quayle had pushed for what many considered a treaty-killing amendment.) Bentsen seemed least at ease when he was defending Dukakis's record, getting out statistics and facts he had been instructed in. But he had scope, talking with authority about the trade imbalance, the national debt, the economic challenges this country is facing. Unlike Quayle—and to a greater extent than Dukakis or Bush—he looked at home with what he was saying. He was better at pushing some of Dukakis's themes than Dukakis had been: he said that as we come to depend on foreigners to help us finance our debt "we lose some of our economic independence for the future," and "You know, if you let me write two hundred billion dollars' worth of hot checks every year I could give you an illusion of prosperity, too."

FOLLOWING the debate, the Bush camp showed several signs of concern. The next day, Bush himself did not mention Quayle until he was pressed to do so by reporters. (He said that Quayle had done "an outstanding job.") Reagan used a "photo opportunity" at the White House to say that Bentsen's line about Kennedy was "a cheap shot." The night before, Lee Atwater, Bush's campaign manager, who is not known for his delicacy, had called it "a cheap shot." When Reagan is called upon for such duty, it is a clear indication of worry. Also on the day after the debate, Bush's campaign chairman, James Baker, said on CNN, "When you think about what might have happened, we have to be pretty happy." Robert Teeter, Bush's pollster, told reporters that though he had conducted a focus-group test during the debate he hadn't yet had time "to pick through the numbers." Public polls were saying that by margins of nearly two to one people thought that Bentsen had "won" the debate.

While Bush was having as little as possible to do with his running mate, an unaccustomedly joyful Dukakis appeared with Bentsen at a rally in Lone Star, Texas. Dukakis, obviously happy about the events of the night before, said that the choice of the running mate is "the first national-security decision." He said, "You have to choose somebody who is ready to step into the Oval Office at a moment's notice and who knows what to do when he gets there." Dukakis and his people thought that the Vice-Presidential debate was a break for them, and they wanted to ride it for all it was worth. They went on the air the day after the debate with their negative ads about Quayle. Dukakis, as he had before, tried to turn it into a question about himself and Bush: "This is the first Presidential decision that George Bush and I had to make. Judge us by how we made it and who we chose." But this, too, is a relatively complicated point.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Dukakis and Bentsen were appearing in a hard-hit area in East Texas; about five thousand workers had been laid off by the Lone Star Steel plant in the last few years. The Dukakis people feel that what chance the Dukakis-Bentsen ticket has in Texas—at that point it was behind by some ten to twelve points—depends on how people feel about the difficult time the state, like other oil-patch states, has been through. With the end of the Iran-Iraq war and new struggles within OPEC, the price of oil had dropped substantially, to about thirteen dollars a barrel, the lowest in over two years. And the drop in oil prices, with its consequent effects on the Texas economy, plus deregulation, had led to the failure of nearly a hundred banks in Texas this year thus far—more than half the total for the United States. However, some reports have it that things are looking up in Texas, and the Bush campaign has done an effective job in painting Dukakis to Texans as a man who is soft on crime and supports gun control. The Dukakis camp has started to run its own, defensive gun-control ad in Texas, saying that Dukakis supports the right of hunters to own guns. His advisers wanted it to also say that he favored the right of homeowners to possess guns, but Dukakis rejected that.

Bentsen's principal assignment had been to help the ticket carry Texas, but now he was in the unexpected position of being the star of the campaign. Suddenly, he was hot. His rallies had an excitement to them that neither of the Presidential candidates had been able to generate authentically. The emergence of this improbable star said some telling things about this election, and about how we choose candidates. Bentsen's new glory came not because he had got off his now-famous line about Kennedy; it came about because he was the most—in fact, the only—authentic figure in the race. What people were responding to was that for the first time this fall they had seen a genuine, whole person, someone at ease with himself and his knowledge. His dignity was most welcome in a campaign where there had been little of it. But not only had Bentsen fallen quite short when he made a brief try for the Presidential nomination, in 1976, but there is little likelihood that he ever could have won the nomination. Had he begun the long march, starting in

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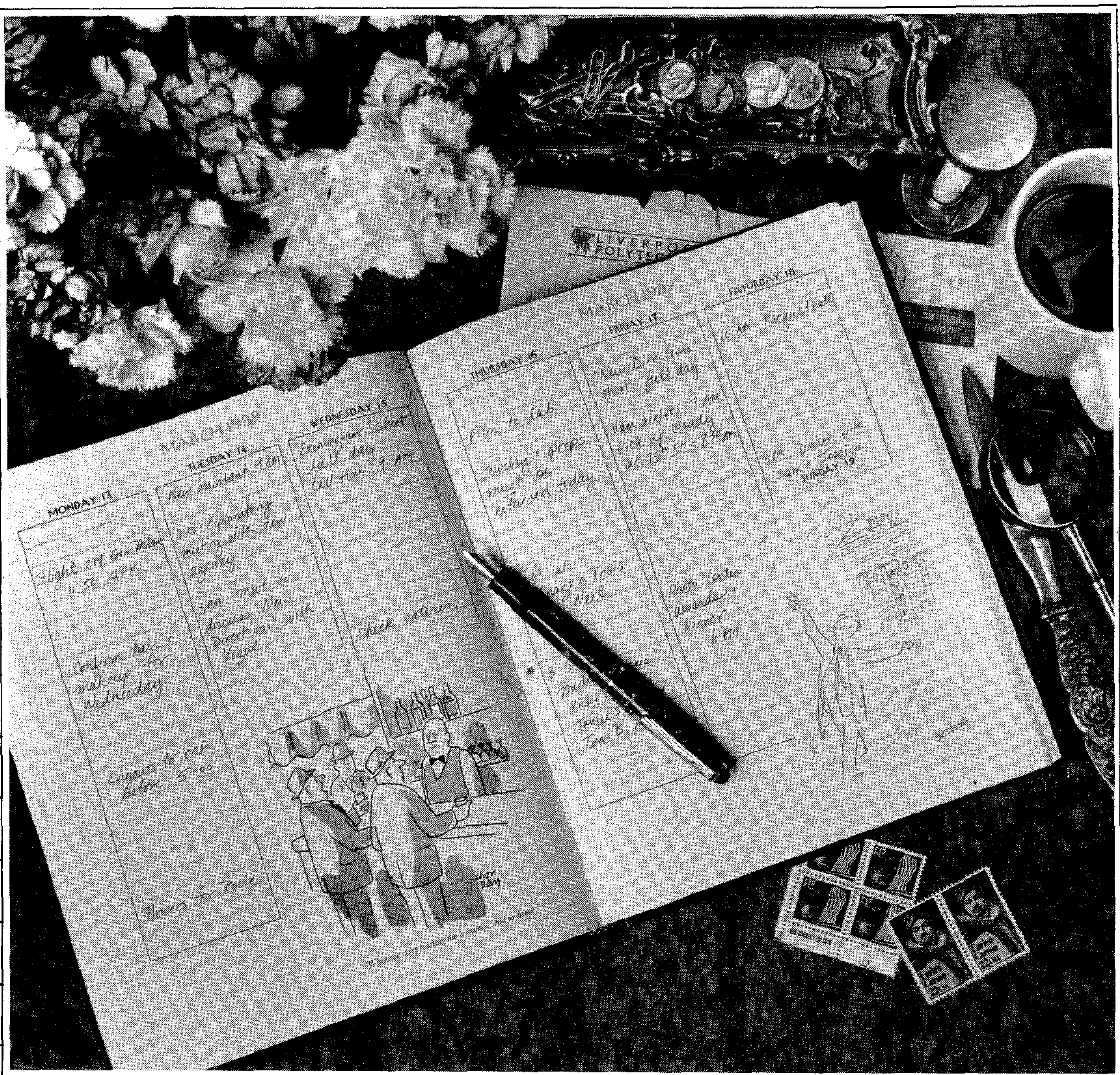

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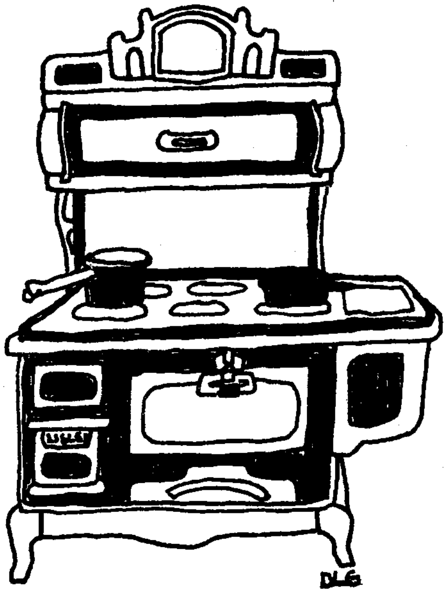
Iowa, he would have been dismissed as too old, too unexciting, and too conservative. The "Presidentialness" that people are responding to in him, as they do, or might, in the case of other national figures, does not necessarily lend itself to nomination demands. This is not to say that no one with dignity and bearing and a certain stature and broad scope could make it, but people like that tend not to try, or don't do very well if they do. And the demands of the nomination process claw at what dignity and Presidentialness a person might have. Bentsen undoubtedly would have been rejected as too conservative by the liberal activists in the Democratic Party, who have their own litmus tests, and tend to dominate the nomination process. (Jimmy Carter won because the liberal vote was divided among other candidates.) Bentsen's voting record—supporting school prayer and Contra aid, opposing federal financing of abortions, being generally pro-business—made him only just tolerable to the Party when Dukakis selected him. Following the Vice-Presidential debate, Bentsen, whose campaign had been limited largely to Texas and the South and Southwest, and centered on appearances on local television, was sent into such key states as New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and he held large rallies.

Quayle, meanwhile, was re-relegated to the byways of the country he had been travelling before, mostly appearing before friendly audiences—though he was in Detroit on Columbus Day. In his appearance there, Quayle, after saying he felt that the question of what he would do if he had to assume the Presidency was "totally inappropriate," because it was hypothetical, gave his response as to what he would do under various circumstances. Quayle's declaration of self-liberation from his "handlers," the week after the Vice-Presidential debate, was the most interesting thing he has done, but there is a question of how much there was to it. He had become understandably fed up with the stories about him as the creature of his handlers (who hadn't done very well by him for the debate), as well as angry with stories quoting Bush advisers as less than thrilled with him, and conceding that he is a drag on the ticket. (Polls show that Bush does better when he alone is measured against Dukakis than when the Bush-Quayle ticket is measured against the Dukakis-Bentsen ticket. People in charge of winning California for Bush have told the Bush campaign to keep Quayle out of the state.) On Tuesday, Quayle told reporters travelling with him in southwest Ohio, "I got tired of all the bad publicity. I decided it couldn't get any worse and I was going to take over. . . . I'm the handler." A number of people were skeptical, and thought this was Quayle's handlers' latest trick. Quayle's doings remain under the strict control of the Bush campaign, and he remains largely inaccessible to the press.

As promised, the Bush campaign went all out on the furlough issue in October. On the day after the Vice-Presidential debate, Bush, in Texas, appearing, as he was to do often in coming days, with law-enforcement officials, launched a new assault on Dukakis on the issue of crime, attacking him for opposing the death penalty and mandatory sentences for drug dealers, calling him one of the "liberal theorists" who had forgotten that law enforcement's "first priority" is "to protect the safety of our neighborhoods and law-abiding citizens." (Bush also met with a group of victims of crime.) He also said that he would set up a new section in the Justice Department to deal with street gangs and would spend an additional billion dollars over the next four years on building federal prisons. Bush did not say where this money would come from, just as he hasn't in offering his other programs; he remains firm ("Read my lips") in saying he will not increase taxes. (Also in Texas on the day after the debate, he reiterated his support for tax breaks for the oil-and-gas industry, saying, as he does of his proposal to lower capital-gains taxes, that the proposal would pay for itself. Things didn't work out that way after Reagan's tax cut was enacted.)



But Bush's biggest ammunition following the Vice-Presidential debate was aimed at Massachusetts' furlough program. He described in gruesome detail the events that occurred when Willie Horton, whom the Bush people have made the most famous furloughee in America, raped and brutalized a Maryland couple. Horton had escaped while on his tenth furlough and committed his new crime in April, 1987. On the day Horton was caught, in Maryland, a moratorium was placed on furloughs for convicted murderers who are not eligible for parole. It was this category of furloughs that set Massachusetts apart—under a law instituted when Francis Sargent, a Republican, was governor, and continued under Edward King, the conservative Democrat who defeated Dukakis at the end of his first term. Earlier this year, Dukakis, under pressure, signed a law eliminating furloughs for first-degree murderers. (Two murders were committed by people furloughed while Reagan was governor of California, and the federal government regularly furloughs convicted drug dealers, one of whom in 1987 committed rape and murder.) Bush said that Dukakis had given a "generous vacation" to fifty-nine criminals convicted of violent crime who escaped while on furlough (this is not correct), and said, "Clint Eastwood's answer to violent crime is 'Go ahead. Make my day.' My opponent's answer is slightly different. His motto is 'Go ahead. Have a nice weekend.' " Bush said that Dukakis had shown "an astounding lack of sensitivity, a lack of human compassion" toward victims of crime and their families.

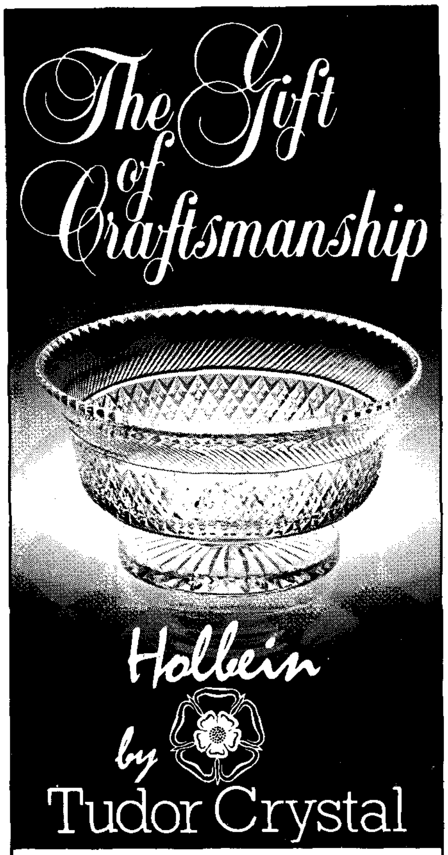
Last Friday, the day after Bush launched his new attack on the furlough program, in what we are supposed to believe was a coincidence, the Maryland couple, Clifford and Angela Barnes, began a four-state tour, beginning with California and Texas, to speak about their experience and criticize Dukakis for never apologizing to them. The tour was sponsored by an "independent," Los Angeles-based group that backs Bush. The same group also sponsored a radio ad in which Clifford Barnes recounts his grim experience. That evening, it became apparent what Bush advisers might have meant when they told me not long ago that before the campaign was over the American people—one adviser talked in terms of American women—would know what Willie Horton looks like. Two networks ran a picture of Horton, who was now in the news. (His picture was already running on some cable networks, in an ad sponsored by another "independent" group.) The furlough issue, like the crime issue as a whole, conveys a subliminal message about race as the Bush people are well aware. A Bush aide says, with some satisfaction, that Dukakis's negatives with white voters are so high as to be insuperable. Some Democrats think their party is still suffering from the backlash to the civil-rights revolution.

Finally, Dukakis, who had taken most of Bush's attacks lying down, responded, and did it effectively. On Saturday, Dukakis spoke at Bates College, in Maine, from which both of his parents had graduated. Pointing out that his own family had been victims of crime—his elder brother had been killed by a hit-and-run driver, and his father, then a seventy-seven-year-old doctor, had been robbed, tied up, and left in his office late one afternoon—Dukakis said, "I don't need any lectures from Mr. Bush on crime-fighting or on the sensitivity or compassion we must extend to the victims of crime." He continued, "Unlike Mr. Bush, who will not take responsibility for anything, I, as a chief executive, took full responsibility for that tragic Horton case and acted to change that policy—and Mr. Bush knows it. So let's look at the facts and stop this shameless playing of politics with the tragedy of crime." Dukakis advisers were pleased that Dukakis had finally got over the hump of talking about his own family's experience, and thought this response so strong that he should have continued to give it—but Dukakis wanted to get on to other subjects.

On Monday, Dukakis and his wife, Kitty, marched up Fifth Avenue in the Columbus Day parade, and Dukakis also offered a program to help the middle class purchase housing. Appearing in Levittown, he pointed out that the grown children of people who had bought homes there when the houses were first built, shortly after the Second World War, could not themselves afford to buy them, and that some had to live with their parents. On Tuesday, Dukakis, speaking at Tufts University, in Massachusetts (both candidates were winding down their schedules in order to prepare for the next debate), promised to "make America number one in science education" and "the technologies of the future," saying he would set up partnerships of the federal government, the business community, and the states to accomplish these things. At Tufts, Dukakis also sounded more protectionist than usual, but still didn't go as far as some of his advisers wanted.

On the same day, Bush, appearing in Seattle (en route to Los Angeles, where the debate is to be held), took Dukakis on for his talk of economic nationalism, saying, "There have always been those who would prey upon people's fear of change." He continued, "Frankly, I've been surprised at my opponent's recent turn to protectionist demagoguery. I don't think he really believes it—he ran against this so-called 'economic nationalism' in the primaries." Bush said, "My opponent desperately needs an issue, and he's willing to scare people to find it" (he had a point), and said that Dukakis was like the members of the Know-Nothing Party of the nineteenth century, which played upon fear of foreigners and Catholics. Bush, as part of his effort to offset the impression of him as a creature of privilege, called for strict law enforcement against inside traders and other white-collar criminals. He said, "They may not carry guns and they may wear fancy suits, but they are a real danger to society, and they should be hit with the maximum penalties of the law."

On the eve of the second debate, Democrats, including some in the Dukakis camp, are fairly pessimistic about the outcome of the election—though few will say now that they think Dukakis has no chance. They know that Dukakis has still not developed a compelling economic message, or given people a strong enough reason to turn out the incumbents when times don't seem very bad. Dukakis could get away without having much of a message in the primaries, but now he



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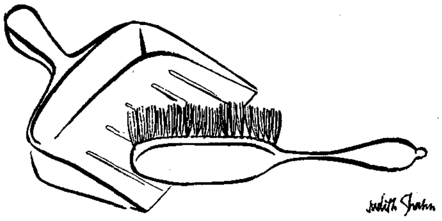
can't. Though there are more than three weeks remaining before the voting, and Bush has only a slight lead over Dukakis in the polls—of three to six points, with most polls putting it at three—most close observers feel that Dukakis can't win under the current circumstances. Though the undecided vote has dropped, a substantial part of each candidate's support remains "soft." By some estimates, a third of the electorate is still uncertain. Dukakis has recouped his lead in California and Washington, and Bush's advantage in Ohio and Missouri has been slipping. But the arithmetic of the electoral college is continuing to swing in Bush's direction, and though most of the big states are still too close to call, Dukakis has far the greater burden in getting to the necessary two hundred and seventy votes. The networks have broadcast electoral-college analyses this week that make the election all but over, but though the result may be similar to the one they are predicting, they are getting ahead of the story. And some of their predictions on how various states will do rest as of now on shaky data and assumptions. We seem to have an obsession with "knowing" how an election will turn out, which gets in the way of just watching it happen—and can affect what happens. Some Democrats gave up on Dukakis a while ago, and the optimism at the end of the Convention in Atlanta is gone. It is to be remembered that a Dukakis victory is not in the true interest of certain Democrats—future candidates for President, for example, or important members of Congress, who are more important if the opposition party holds the White House—though of course these people can't say such a thing out loud. Some Democrats, remembering the Carter Presidency unhappily, aren't keen on carrying water for another unpopular President, which is what they fear Dukakis would be. Many Democrats who have been waiting for eight years to return to the government are glumly concluding that they'll have to wait longer. The Bush people talk optimistically and feel that victory is within their grasp—but that they haven't quite reached it. What Dukakis has to do in the debate is not necessarily, as several analysts—and also the Bush people—are saying, something dramatic; he has to come off with a strong enough performance to make the contest more truly competitive than it is now, more near to even, and give his candidacy propulsion into the final stretch. His people know that if he doesn't do this he probably can't win.

OCTOBER 20TH. Whatever Dukakis needed to do in the debate to give his candidacy a lift, to accelerate it, didn't happen. There is something very puzzling about Dukakis: there have been times in the course of this year when it seemed that he would be an upbeat, can-do, enthusiastic, and optimistic candidate, a person who couldn't wait to get in there and roll up his sleeves and make things happen. That's the kind of governor he has been, but these are not usually the things he projects. An adviser says that Dukakis wanted to run that kind of campaign but could see, in the face of the Bush attacks, that it wasn't working. Some advisers think Dukakis was thrown off by the nature of the Bush campaign, and that this is where the zest went. (But they aren't really sure where it went.) In any event, Dukakis didn't have the presence, the commandingness, to surmount the Bush attacks. Dukakis aides say that he rejected an all-out negative campaign against Bush (and they are not sure that such a campaign would have worked, either). It may well be that Dukakis simply doesn't have the dimension to command a national stage. Dukakis has not yet become a national figure in the sense of someone who speaks to and reaches the nation at large. The explanation may lie in his experience: to become governor of Massachusetts (or of most states) one does not need to command a large following, offer a compelling vision, be a strong leader. A Presidential candidate without a compelling message or a particularly engaging public persona has formidable problems getting through. Dukakis had never run a big campaign—when running for the office of governor, or in it—to meet with people in small groups and be reasonably competent. There are exceptions, of course, but good governors don't necessarily make good national leaders; these days, governors are mostly managers. Dukakis's concept of the Presidency also seems to be based in his experience as a governor: he speaks of it as calling groups into a room, forming "coalitions" and "partnerships"—not as leading the country through establishing a relationship with the people and moving them. (It is not yet established whether Bush will be able to move people.) The nomination contest did not require that Dukakis be of national dimension; the only time he has seemed to be was when he gave his acceptance speech in Atlanta. But that turned out to be an exception.



In the debate, Dukakis seemed flat and at times almost disengaged. He was clearly trying to come across as warmer and less snappish than he did in the first debate, and he succeeded, but this wasn't enough. (The warmth was mostly a technical matter of looking into the camera more softly. The half smile was unconvincing.) The Dukakis camp's goal was to deal with the problems that Bush's "favorable" ratings are higher than Dukakis's and that a relatively high percentage of people say they still don't know much about Dukakis. It wanted to avoid a repetition of the first debate, in which Dukakis seemed to win on points but hurt himself with his sharp and pedantic manner. The Dukakis people talk as if there is a conflict between the candidate's trying to be more likable and being tough on Bush, but, of course, that's not necessarily the case. Yet it seems to be so for Dukakis, who is not very deft with the knife. His advisers loaded him up for the debate with self-deprecatory remarks, which weren't used, and other keys to a more pleasing personality. But they were trying to make him something he isn't, and it didn't work. They were playing Bush's game. In trying not to be "mean," Dukakis was blah. He may have had so many goals in his head that he froze. He was stiff in manner and prone to recitations—of lists of things he would do, of what he had done. Dukakis, like many other liberals, is a process-oriented man: he thinks process and loves process, he enjoys dealing in policy. But this is not enough for a national leader—it does not move people. He spoke in the debate—several times—of the need to make "tough choices," but that won't win over masses of voters. Nothing was more

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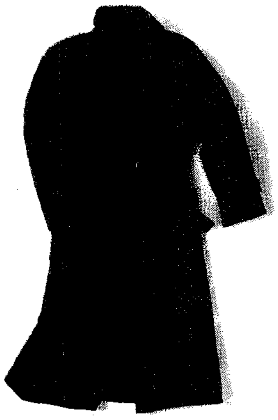

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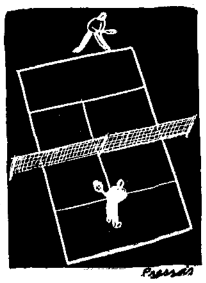
telling in this respect than Dukakis's choosing to observe a ground rule of the debate (obviously imposed by the Bush people) that neither candidate could challenge the other to a third debate—after Bush responded to a question about whether there should be another debate by flatly ruling out another one. After the debate, at a rally and out of the national eye, Dukakis called for a third debate. Bush may not have all the attributes of a leader, either, but he has managed during some of this fall campaign to look like one. Dukakis's narrow-gaugedness, his minimalist world experience, shows. Bush is not a particularly deep or thoughtful man, but he has been around and has a range of experiences to call upon to offer himself as someone who knows and has seen a lot. Dukakis is back to lacking size (this has nothing to do with his relatively short height); the one time he showed size was in his acceptance speech. Some politicians show size the moment they enter a room (Ronald Reagan, Mario Cuomo, Jesse Jackson). There is something so contained about Dukakis that he offers little to connect with. (John Kennedy was contained, but he conveyed an energy of belief and was eloquent—and of course he had charm, and a keen sense of humor.)

A big problem for Dukakis in this and the first debate, as well as in his campaign, is that he lacked a theme. He was supposed to talk about "making America number one again," and all that, but he didn't, and anyway it isn't much of a theme. When the debate ended, it didn't seem that Dukakis had said or done anything that would lead millions of undecided voters to conclude that he was their man—much less cause great numbers of people who had been inclined to vote for Bush to change their mind. Dukakis seems to lack imagination—thus he let a number of opportunities to say something interesting go by. He seemed incapable of spontaneity. He didn't even bring up Bush's use of the furlough plan and give the strong response he had given at Bates College. This was a great disappointment to his advisers. Moreover, the issue on which Bush has done the greatest damage to him is crime. Dukakis is correct when he claims, as he did in the debate, that Massachusetts has had "the biggest drop in crime of any industrial state"—but it doesn't seem to do him much good. Dukakis did talk about the furlough and his family's experiences the next day in California, but this was a little late. Dukakis's mechanistic answer to the first debate question, a deliberately shocking (and tasteless) one about whether, if his wife were raped and murdered, he would support the death penalty, was much pointed to afterward as symptomatic of Dukakis's stiffness and lack of emotion. ("No, I don't," he replied, and went on to make his routine points about the death penalty.) Dukakis advisers think that he was aware that he had blown it with this response, and he wasn't able to recover in the rest of the debate. Asked about the fact that people don't find him likable enough—a question that had been anticipated—Dukakis blew the opportunity to say something interesting (or "likable"), by saying, pretty seriously, "I think I'm a reasonably likable guy . . . but I'm also a serious guy. I think the Presidency of the United States is a very serious office." Though he had been prepared to do so, he didn't take much opportunity to try to respond to the issues Bush has used, successfully, to paint him as a leftish politician out of the mainstream—he didn't begin to express the kind of moral outrage that might make people think again about what Bush had been saying, and see Dukakis as a man of strength. Dukakis has let Bush win the strength contest by default.



Bush's performance in the second debate was substantially better than in the first one—in fact, his best performance of the year. Bush was far more relaxed and coherent than in the earlier debate (the two are undoubtedly connected); though he mangled a few sentences, he came across as confident, in command, and a very pleasant follow. It's odd that the same man can give such different performances. He joshed with the panel and abjured obviously rehearsed one-liners. (Dukakis did neither.) Roger Ailes says that Bush went through less intense preparation for the second debate, and that he and Bush did a lot of kidding around on the day of the debate. Ailes says, "I felt if he went in relaxed, he'd do better." Bush was told about the problems with his performance in the first debate, and resolved to do better. His advisers have said all year that he rises to the occasion, and, says one, as he gets closer to the Presidency he becomes more Presidential.

Clearly defensive about criticism of the kind of campaign he has been running, Bush was far less harsh and far more positive than before—though he still got in sly digs at Dukakis, and used the word "liberal" as often as possible. Dukakis, defensively, chided him for using "labels"—to no avail. He had been prepared with material to take the "liberal" issue on more aggressively, but didn't use it. In being defensive about the label, he seemed to accept Bush's premise that it's a terrible thing to be a liberal. Though Bush has changed his views on a number of things, he came across as someone who believed firmly what he was saying. He drew the differences between himself and Dukakis without being shrill about it. Whenever he could, he went to what has been working for him in his campaign—depicting himself as more in touch with mainstream America's values than Dukakis is. (He also used the word "values" a lot.) He took as many opportunities as possible to point out that he, unlike Dukakis, favors the death penalty, that Dukakis had supported the nuclear freeze, and to charge that Dukakis advocates "unilateral cuts" in arms. Bush accomplished enough in the debate, and Dukakis didn't.

Dukakis tried to deal with the new, more moderate George Bush by saying several times, "I don't know which George Bush I'm debating," and pointing out differences between what Bush is now saying and actions he took or positions he supported as Vice-President. Dukakis was right that Bush, as head of the regulatory-relief task force, tried to dismantle certain environmental regulations, but because Congress overrode some of these actions Bush was able to claim progress in these areas. Dukakis was correct that Bush, in casting a vote to freeze Social Security cost-of-living allowances for a year, had voted to "cut" Social Security benefits, but Bush was right that Dukakis had supported that idea in the National Governors' Association—both were supporting a large deficit-reduction proposal—and also that Democrats always demagogue this issue "just about this time of year." Both

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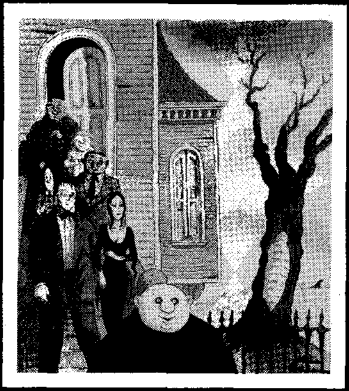

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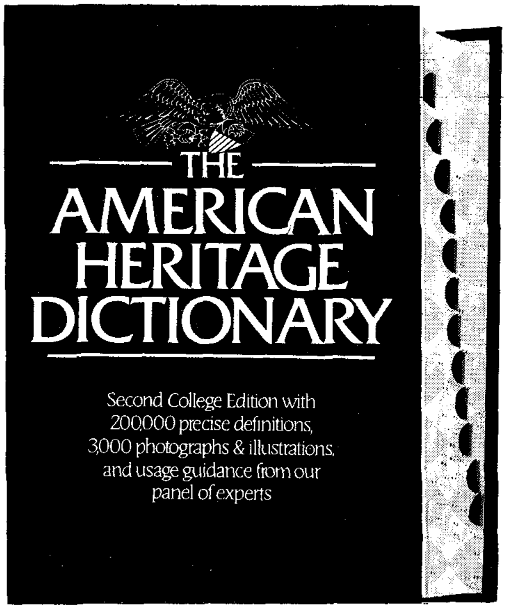
men continued to avoid specifying anything politically difficult they would do to reduce the budget deficit, and both seemed to rule out making any cuts in entitlement programs. Dukakis left himself open to criticism by failing to say what he would do to modernize the ground-based missile system, but he seems not to want a new system, despite what his advisers say, and mentioned often his intention to cut certain defense spending. For the first time in a while, he went back to his criticism of the Administration's policy in Nicaragua as a "failed policy" and a "fiasco." Neither he nor Bush has talked about the Contra-aid issue very much, for parallel reasons: both Bush's position in favor of supporting the Contras and Dukakis's position against it carry political risk. Contra aid is unpopular, but some of Dukakis's political advisers say that his position reinforces the picture of a liberal. Dukakis's mention of the Nicaragua issue in the debate was a reversion to type. (Congress has approved twenty-seven million dollars in "humanitarian" aid to the Contras, but the Administration has given up trying to get more military assistance.)

Bush took every opportunity he could to stress the themes of peace and prosperity, and to associate himself with Reagan. Dukakis took his best shot at arguing that it is time for change, saying "I don't think we can be satisfied when we're spending a hundred and fifty billion dollars a year on interest alone on the national debt—much of it going to foreign bankers. Or when twenty-five per cent of our high-school students are dropping out of school, or when we have two and a half million of our fellow-citizens—a third of them veterans—who are homeless and living on streets and in doorways in this country, or when Mr. Bush's prescription for our economic future is another tax giveaway to the rich. We can do better than that." (The trade deficit widened substantially that day, but Dukakis didn't mention it.) But what he said was not convincing enough. Bush made his best case for staying with his party, and with the man who had served under Reagan. He also took note of the fact that big things are happening in the Soviet Union. The recent upheaval in the Kremlin, giving Mikhail Gorbachev more power, and the clear signs that Gorbachev and his allies believe that the Soviet Union must turn to radical economic reform, at the cost of foreign adventures, or even pure Communism—plus the increasing cracks in Eastern Europe—present the next President with important challenges and will require great wisdom. Neither man is very convincing about having thought these things through.

In his closing, Bush crisply and firmly went through his differences with Dukakis—on taxes, the death penalty. He said he "would appoint judges that have a little more sympathy for the victims of crime and a little less for the criminals." (In the debate Bush had said that he would not appoint liberals who "legislate from the bench" to the Supreme Court—three Justices are in their eighties—and defended Robert Bork. Dukakis and his people thought this gave them an opening, and Dukakis talked about Bork the next day, but whether this will sway millions is questionable.) Despite its importance, Dukakis has said little about the Supreme Court, because the Court issue suggests the issues of crime and civil liberties—that's what Bush is saying when he vows not to appoint liberals to the bench—and both issues are political losers with the socially conservative middle-class voters Dukakis is trying to win over. Bush said, "This election is about big things," and he is right. The candidates may not be talking about big things very much, but the next President will have to play a big part on the world's unpredictable stage, and deal with difficult economic and other domestic issues. Bush, in his closing, hit all the important notes: having placed himself as more against crime and taxes than Dukakis, he insisted that he does want "a kinder and gentler nation," and said that he wants "to invest in our children" and supports child care. (The child-care proposal, along with others that Bush has said he is for—parental leave and a higher minimum wage—have all died in Congress.) He aligned himself with Reagan: "I ask you to consider the experience I have had in working with a President who has revolutionized the situation around the world. America stands tall again." He said that he would like to be able to tell his grandchildren that as President he had achieved a ban on chemical and biological weapons. And he closed by paraphrasing Lincoln, as Reagan often does, calling America "the last best hope of man on earth." It was a very effective closing, which Dukakis hadn't come close to matching.

FOLLOWING the debate, Dukakis and his people, though they knew that the prospects were now very bleak, had to struggle to keep the nation from concluding that the election was over, and Bush and his people had to ward off overconfidence—or the appearance of overconfidence. With polls indicating that people felt by two-to-one margins that Bush had "won" the debate, and with the gap between Bush and Dukakis in the national polls widening, this was difficult. Over the weekend, the Los Angeles *Times* and CBS gave Bush leads of ten and eleven points respectively, and on Monday the NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll put Bush ahead by a whopping seventeen points. Even the Bush people said that this was excessive. Both camps' polling showed Bush comfortably ahead, and the only question was how much of this was a temporary phenomenon—a reaction to the debate and also the subsequent coverage that said Dukakis had blown his last big opportunity. The television coverage of the campaign inevitably reflected the polls, with the pieces about Dukakis framed by comments about the trouble he was in. This phenomenon, which the Dukakis people had been trying to stave off, makes it more difficult than ever for the candidate to get his message across—if he has one. Dukakis campaigned spiritedly in California and Texas on Friday and Saturday—saying several things his advisers wish he had said in the debate—and on Sunday, before an audience of supporters in Faneuil Hall, in Boston, he sharpened his message further. The rally at Faneuil Hall was designed to pick up Dukakis's spirits as much as those of his supporters. Dukakis's advisers said that in this closing phase of the campaign he would talk more about values, comparing his own to Bush's—offering himself as the candidate more likely to stand up for the average American, and Bush as the one who favors the wealthy. Saying some of the things he had been supposed to say in the debate, he portrayed himself as someone who accepts responsibility, and Bush as the man who sat through seventeen meetings on the question of arms sales to Iran and didn't object,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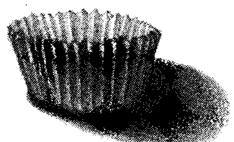
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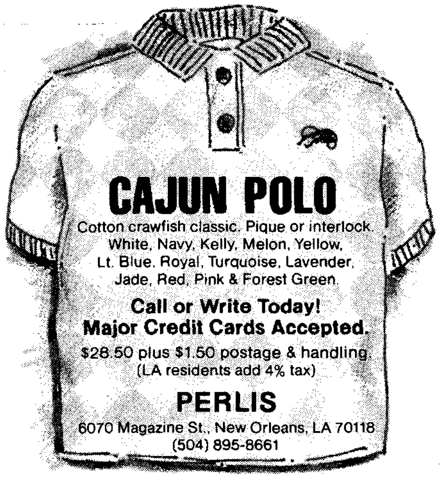
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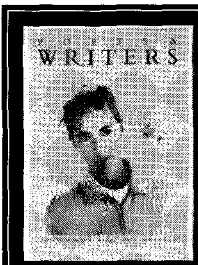
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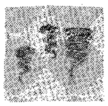
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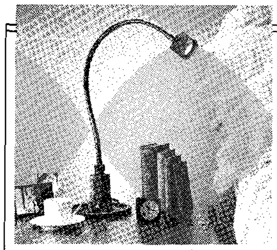

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and who won't accept responsibility for Noriega's being on the United States' payroll after it was known he was a drug dealer.

None of these themes were new, of course, but, the Dukakis people said, they would be put more sharply—and they were. This leaves the question of why they hadn't been put more sharply before. Or whether it matters. What Dukakis said or failed to say in his campaign is only part of his problem; the other part—probably the larger one—has been Bush's ability to paint Dukakis as a liberal, out of touch with the mainstream. Yet Dukakis, by his slowness to react, or even to see the peril in what Bush was doing to him, became an accomplice in Bush's strategy. A few people around Dukakis saw some time ago that Dukakis was vulnerable on the defense and crime issues, but generally the campaign underestimated the potency of the issues of the Pledge of Allegiance and the furlough program, just as it had underestimated Bush (almost everyone did) as a Presidential candidate. Dukakis was dismissive of these issues long after people around him saw that they were trouble.

This is not the first time we have seen a Presidential candidate begin to find his voice at the end, as he seemed to be going down the tubes—and wondered why it had taken so long. At Faneuil Hall, Dukakis said, "I may not express my feelings as eloquently as some. But does anyone doubt what I would have said if I was in the room when they made those decisions to sell arms to the Ayatollah, to put Noriega on the payroll, to veto civil rights and women's rights, or to choose people like Dan Quayle and Ed Meese and James Watt and Robert Bork? I would have said three simple words: 'This is wrong.' That's the test of leadership; that's the test of passion and principle; and that's the issue in this election." He also said, "I want to be President of the United States not because it's the next rung on the ladder but because it's the way to act on my values. And I mean the commitments of a lifetime, not labels and buzzwords that score well in the polls." But these were still complicated points, made a little late. Dukakis was appealing to reason, while the opposition was reaching people's emotions, through symbols. He delineated more sharply his differences with Bush on relief for the average American—pointing to, among other things, Bush's proposal for a cut in the capital-gains tax and his savings plan for the middle class, which would yield little. "Accountability is the essence of democracy," Dukakis said. "I've taken responsibility for my mistakes. But Mr. Bush takes responsibility for nothing." Though there was a certain eloquence to what Dukakis said, and also some poignance, more than this would be needed to turn the election around—and the Dukakis people knew it.

Early this week, Dukakis went on to Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois, giving a variation of the Boston speech and emphasizing his empathy for working Americans. He said, "The difference between George Bush and me boils down to this: George Bush wants to help the people who already have it made. I want to make every American a full shareholder in the American dream." To try to show a warmer, more human Dukakis, he appeared not only before crowds but also in small settings—a café, a bowling alley—and he was back to playing "Happy Days Are Here Again" on the trumpet. On Tuesday, in Michigan, Dukakis appeared before more lively crowds than usual, and was himself more lively than usual; the behavior of a candidate and his crowd are symbiotic. Continuing to portray Bush as the candidate of the rich—some of his aides had wanted him to do more of this before—Dukakis told working people, "I'm on your side," and pledged to get rid of the trade deficit and advocated more training programs. And, running as an acknowledged underdog, he hammered Bush for the kind of campaign he has been running: "He's got the flags and the balloons but no convictions and no ideas and no plans." On the same day, Bentsen, in California, began to hammer at the Bush campaign, calling it "a carnival sideshow of nonsense and negativism."

Over the weekend, stories out of Boston indicated that the Dukakis camp had settled on a strategy of trying to carve an electoral-college victory out of seventeen states that remained relatively competitive, but this was not really a strategy. Toward the end of a campaign, candidates always narrow down the number of states they focus on—Bush is doing the same thing, and the two men are focussing on essentially the same states. The Dukakis pretense of a fifty-state campaign was abandoned some time ago—as the Dukakis people had said last summer that it would be—though not before Kitty Dukakis travelled to Alaska and Hawaii. The strategy, to the extent that it can be called one, was to try, through a sharpened message and a heavy use of ads and appearances on television programs, to narrow the Bush lead back to low single digits so as to try to make the race competitive again. In fact, part of the strategy involves going to states where Dukakis has very little chance now—Georgia and Louisiana as well as Texas at the end of this week—in order to negate the idea that Dukakis has written off entire regions. What Dukakis says in Texas, where the ticket is way behind, will be heard in the rest of the country—if it is covered on television at all. New Dukakis ads have him talking directly and sincerely into the camera about America's loss of competitive edge and about parents' concerns about their children. Yesterday, in Illinois, Dukakis held up and decried as "garbage" literature that had been distributed by the state Republican Party (the state Parties are doing a lot of Bush's dirty work), which mentions the Horton case, and says, "All the murderers and rapists and drug pushers and child molesters in Massachusetts vote for Michael Dukakis." Many local politicians had been telling Dukakis that he had to answer Bush's attacks more effectively. (In the jittery stock-market atmosphere, a year after the crash, stocks dropped sharply yesterday because of a rumor, which was untrue, that the Washington *Post* was about to publish a politically damaging story about Bush's personal life.) An ABC poll, released yesterday and showing a Bush lead of seven points, is considered too narrow by even the Dukakis people, who are quite realistic about the probable fate of their candidate and are only hoping now that the likely defeat will not be of embarrassing proportions. (Both camps think that Bush is leading by nine or ten points.) Today, Dukakis said, "Above all, the truth should matter a lot in a Presidential campaign, because we learned during Watergate that it matters a lot in the Oval Office."

The Bush campaign, meanwhile, is proceeding according to plan—it has always had more careful planning than the Dukakis campaign—and this week Bush is attacking Dukakis on the subjects of defense and foreign policy. On Monday, he appeared at a Martin-Marietta plant outside Denver and hit Dukakis for not saying how he would modernize the land-based part of the strategic triad and for calling the Strategic Defense Initiative "a fantasy." A Bush aide acknowledges that if elected Bush, who has avoided the question, will have to make a decision about which land-based system to pursue.

On Tuesday, Bush appeared at Westminster College, in Fulton, Missouri, where forty-two years ago Winston Churchill first spoke of the "Iron Curtain," and he said that the turmoil in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was the result of Reagan's policy of "peace through strength" (though obviously internal problems had much to do with it). Bush delivered the speech in a thoughtful manner and did not mention Dukakis—and also did not say how he would deal with the new situation. He said that what exists now is "a rusting curtain," and, "It would be far too simple, even dangerous, to conclude . . . that Soviet foreign policy is driven exclusively by economic weakness." Yesterday, Bush called on Dukakis to join in a bipartisan agreement that United States troops not be withdrawn from Europe, but Dukakis had never suggested that they be. Today, Bush appeared in New York, where he was endorsed by the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, the nation's largest police union, and championed the death penalty and attacked the furlough program. An "independent" committee is now running an ad showing the Barnes couple. In the ad, Clifford Barnes says, "For twelve hours, we were beaten, slashed, and terrorized. My wife, Angie, was brutally raped." He also said, "When his liberal experiment failed, Dukakis simply looked away." The Bush campaign has begun to run new ads about Dukakis and defense, one of them showing the famous scene of Dukakis riding in a tank, and listing weapons Dukakis has opposed. The list is incorrect and misleading in several respects. The other ad shows a nuclear explosion and a picture of Bush greeting Gorbachev, and says, "This is no time for uncertainty or weakness." The Bush people feel that the theme of "peace through strength," of Reagan's

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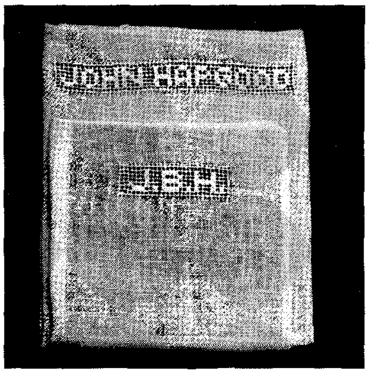

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having brought respect to America through an arms buildup, is a winner (whatever the facts), and they are right. They have successfully presented Bush as someone who offers continuity and change: as one who will continue all that was good about the Reagan period but will also do more for the middle class and for children, and for the environment, and as someone ready to build on Reagan's arms-control successes. It's a potent package, and at the same time the Bush campaign has successfully painted Dukakis—as some Dukakis advisers had feared he would—as representing risky change. The Bush people are concentrating fiercely on not making any mistakes now that victory is near, and on *running* as hard as if they were behind. Atwater says, "That's the best way to keep a lead." As was planned all along, Bush will concentrate on the big states that remain relatively close—the industrial states in the Midwest, Missouri, and California, plus Texas (even though Bush is ahead in Texas by about fifteen points), New Jersey, Washington, and Oregon. (It is also making some effort in New York and Pennsylvania, which should be relatively friendly to Dukakis, in part to make Dukakis use more resources there.) These are the states most elections get down to in the end. Roger Stone, a political consultant who is running the Bush campaign in California, says that "a very important strategic decision was made this week about California." He had proposed, he said, and James Baker had approved, "that our TV ads should remain offensive—some people say 'negative,' I say 'offensive'—that we should keep pounding the furlough, the death penalty, and mandatory sentencing, that it was not time to go for a 'kinder and gentler' strategy, as it were." Stone says that the same decision has been made for Texas, which is being *run* for Bush by Charles Black, a business partner of his, whereas other states will see a mixture of ads. So, in the final weeks, the Bush campaign will continue to run negative as well as positive ads and will go after Dukakis on taxes and the economy, and on crime. The last week, the Bush people say, is to feature a recapitulation of all the issues Bush has used against Dukakis, in a combination of benign persuasion and whatever amount of attack is necessary. —ELIZABETH DREW

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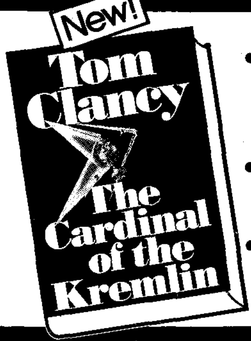
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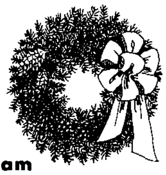

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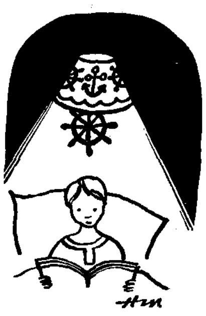
BRIEFLY NOTED

GENERAL

Chekhov: A Spirit Set Free, by V. S. Pritchett (Random House; $17.95). In this terse yet tender book Sir Victor leads the reader through Chekhov's fiction, in chronological order, allowing the biography to be background music. Glints of confident opinion highlight his rapid survey: "The danger [of a collected edition]—as we know from Henry James's revisions—lay in the temptation to elaborate, but Chekhov was a cutter, sensitive to the musicality of simple language." But the critic's voice is subordinate to the tale-teller's, as the marvellous stories and plays are recapitulated in a tone of delight and wonder. Two impressions emerge: the extent to which Chekhov's brilliant literary activity was mingled, in his forty-four busy years, with medical practice, good works, family concerns, and impulsive travel; and the poignant paradox that as his health got worse his art got even better—he produced "The Bishop," "In the Ravine," "The Lady with the Little Dog," "The Darling," "The Three Sisters," and "The Cherry Orchard" in his last five, Yalta-bound years. The acceptingness at the heart of his humanity and limpid realism seemed to widen as his body wasted; he let himself fall in love with Olga Knipper and, a few weeks from his death, talked of joining an expedition to the Arctic. "A Spirit Set Free" is this invigorating study's subtitle, as Chekhov's declared "holy of holies" was "love and absolute freedom—freedom from force and falsehood."



33 Poems, by Robert Lax, edited by Thomas Kellein (New Directions; $19.95 cloth, $12.95 paper). A collection covering some fifty years, by a poet who at one time lived on the island of Manhattan and now lives on Patmos. Several of these poems are as short as aphorisms: "wake up jack/it's 1949," goes one, in its entirety. Another ("Sea & Sky") lasts sixty-one pages, though it's made up mainly of lines of one syllable. All could be profitably read aloud. The author, a lifelong friend and sometime collaborator of Thomas Merton, writes throughout with the wry surprise of humor and self-knowledge. The other common denominator here is rhythm: even the minimal-looking "Sea & Sky" falls into a rolling ballad swing. And, it turns out, the changes in the poems' kinds of rhythm closely follow changes in the times in which the poems were written. "The Man with the Big General Notions"—a social observation from 1939, which was printed, in *The New Yorker*, in 1942—is a (non-pretty) nursery rhyme. During "The Circus of the Sun" (1949-51), carrousel tunes with titles like "Penelope and Mogador" spring out of earnest-voiced recitative. In 1967, Army call signs are turned into sensibly nonsensical jazz ("Able Charlie Baker Dance"). And the prose rhythms of "21 Pages," an inward and outward autobiography from 1982, could be those of a simple epistle or of a complex fable.

Men of Zeal: A Candid Inside Story of the Iran-Contra Hearings, by William S. Cohen and George J. Mitchell (Viking; $19.95). Maine's senators—Cohen is a Republican and Mitchell a Democrat—describe their service on the joint congressional committee that investigated the Iran-Contra affair last year. Their book is earnest and readable, and it explains, as it goes along, congressional proprieties, constitutional niceties, and the methods of congressional investigations. The senators' day-by-day recollections are frequently rueful. Because the committee gave no thought to television-production values, the good guys all too often looked like bad boys, and vice versa. Yet misguided sympathy began to evaporate as, in time, the arrogance, mendacity, and venality of many of the witnesses became evident, and as, under examination, they contradicted themselves or each oth-

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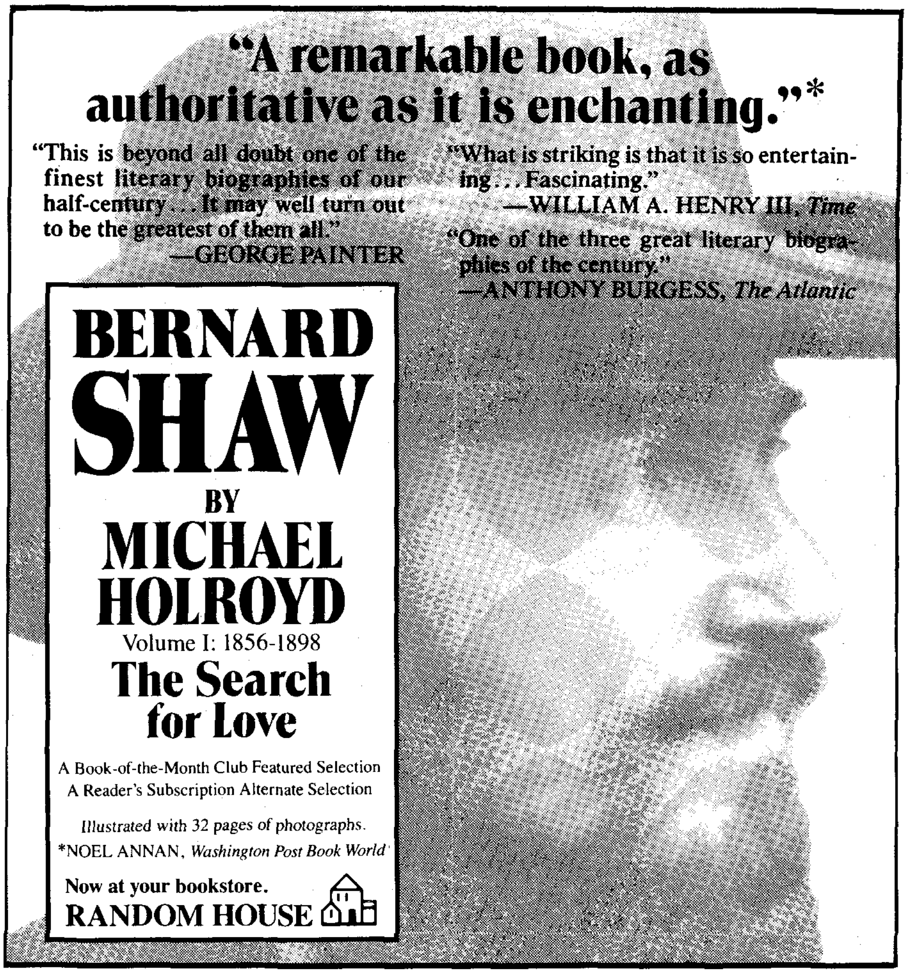

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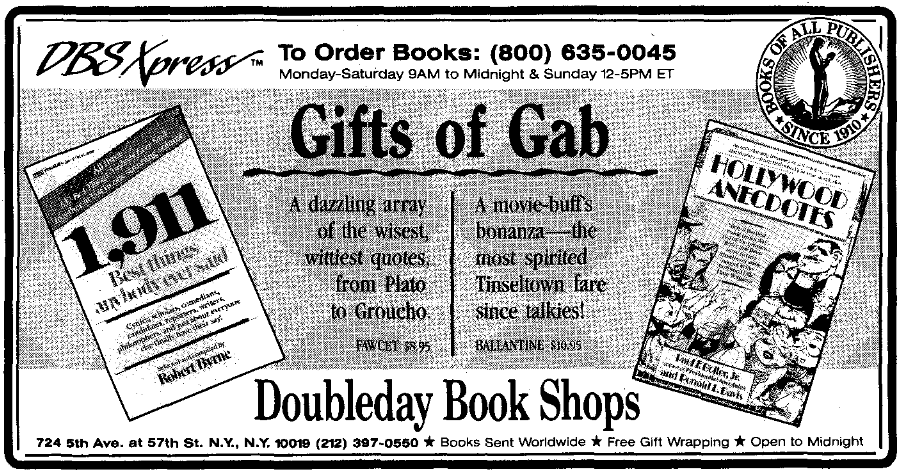
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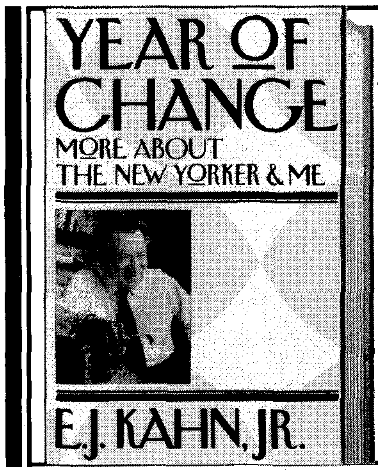

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er. The authors do not think that the entire story can ever be unravelled, but they draw practical lessons from painful discoveries.

NORA: THE REAL LIFE OF MOLLY BLOOM, by Brenda Maddox (Houghton Mifflin; $24.95). A solid, richly textured, and satisfying biography of Mrs. James Joyce. Nora Joyce's life story gets properly under way in the book when she, an auburn-haired beauty serving as a chambermaid in Finn's Hotel, Dublin, elopes with the penniless young writer. Ms. Maddox then embarks on a retelling of the now familiar Joycean saga of exile, cunning, poverty, and sorrow, but with the focus on the vital wife of the genius, the woman without whom he would probably never have realized his great work. This is a volume to pair with and complement (and expand upon) Richard Ellmann's definitive life of Joyce. Ms. Maddox refutes many old chestnuts that have persistently cropped up in less informed writings and reminiscences about the Joyces—that Nora couldn't cook, for example (she could and did; chicken was a specialty), that she was illiterate (not so, as her lively letters attest), that she never read her husband's books ("What's all this about 'Ulysses'?" she once said. " 'Finnegans Wake.' That's the important book"). Above all, this biography accords Nora Joyce her proper place in the Joycean canon, which is very near the center. Photographs.

NOTE: Neil Sheehan's "A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam" has been published by Random House ($24.95). Some of the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

•

Auditions for Gaslight Theater presentation of ALL MY SONGS by Arthur Miller, Sept. 7-8 at 7, Hallowell City Hall.—*Portland (Maine) Maine Times.*

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•

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[*From the Police Report in the Amherst (Mass.) Bulletin*]

Police said a customer at The Sub restaurant complained at 1:03 a.m. Thursday that her sandwich had insufficient tuna. Police said they drove her back to her sorority.

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DEWAR'S PROFILE:

JEREMIAH TOWER

HOME: San Francisco, California.

AGE: 45.

PROFESSION: Head chef and owner, Stars.

HOBBY: Running the Society to Stamp Out Kiwis. "The fruit, not the bird."

LAST BOOK READ: *Bread and Circuses*, Patrick Brantlinger.

LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Wrote a cookbook, *New American Classics*, featuring such recipes as Eggs in Hell, Texas Style.

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: "With a B.A. and M.A. in architecture from Harvard, it's hard to explain, but it's a lot of fun."

QUOTE: "Fresh herbs."

PROFILE: Aristocratic, confident and a self-described monarchist. "Everyone likes to have things his own way. I just admit it."

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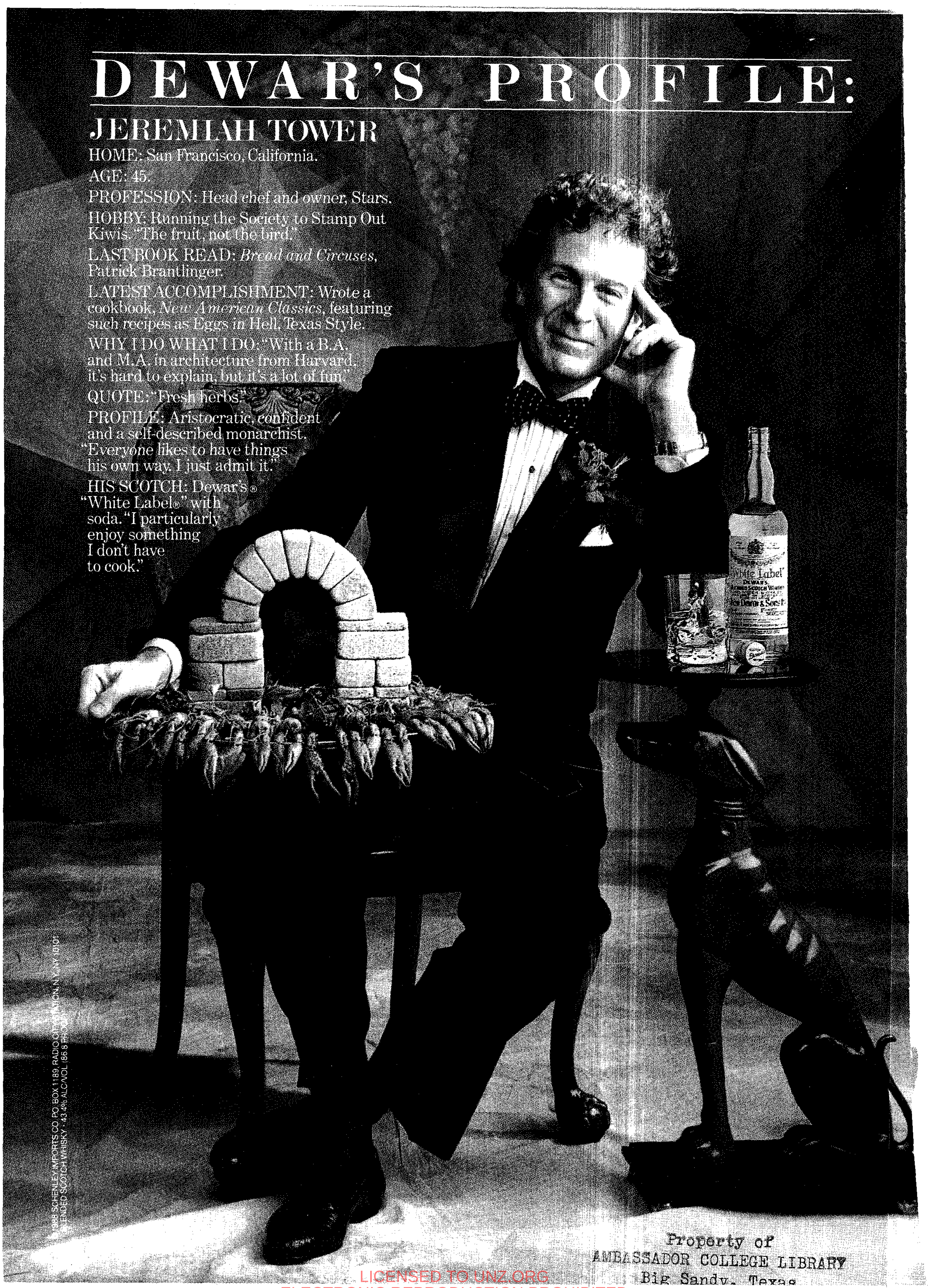

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